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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1888.

AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

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CHAPTER XLV.

THAT swift drive in the darkness along the steep road was one to be remembered. The wind seemed to increase in strength with every half-mile they covered. It was not a mighty wind, but a strong, rushing one that filled Madge's ears with all sorts of strange, wild cries, and seemed to bring the rush of the ocean to the very road-side long before they neared the coast. There was a moon, nearly at its full, a cold, white, ghastly thing which showed now and again when a gust of wind swept away an inky mountain of cloud. Madge held her watch in her hand the whole distance in order to take advantage of every such passing gust. It had been half-past five as a turn in the road had hidden the slate roofs and grey walls of Lower Upton from view, and seven o'clock chimed from the village church as the sturdy chestnuts clattered along the stony street of bleak little Elstree.

Here, at the little inn which vaunted itself as a "railway hotel," Madge dismissed her post-boy with his tired horses, and took possession of the only two which the stables of the small hostelry could supply, thereby cutting off from the Count all means of transit to Cregan's Head from this place, save that which his legs

afforded.

She reckoned that by this time he must have accomplished about half of his short railway journey from Lower Upton to

hour's time he would be exactly at this point in his road. To this half-hour she thankfully added another for the two miles' walk along the steep dark road which lay between Elstree and Cregan's Head.

Madge knew Elstree very well, but, as it chanced, had never been to Cregan's Head, in spite of its short distance from Although she had frequently Upton. heard it described as "the other end of nowhere," or "a God-forgotten place, where gulls were plentiful and Christians few.' she was totally unprepared for the scene of utter desolation which met her view, as the man pulled up his steaming horses at the foot of a narrow pathway which seemed cut out of a mass of black rock.

"It's as near as I can take you, ma'am," he said in reply to Madge's astonished

exclamation:

"But surely this is not Cregan's Head!" She strained her eyes, peering into the surrounding darkness.

"Which way lies the coastguard station?" she asked. "Where is the little fishing hamlet, and where the old lighthouse ?"

Behind her the bare, grey road, along which they had driven, wound away into gloom; before her stood the dark mass of rock, cleft by the narrow, upward-winding pathway; on her left-hand lay a dim waste of country, with stunted trees showing black out of the whitish ocean mist which overhung it; on her right hand stretched the expanse of ocean—miles upon miles of moving, rushing, noisy darkness.

The man answered her questions in

succession.

"The coastguard station is two miles distant, ma'am, on the other sides of these rocks, and the fishing hamlet is half a mile Elstree, and that consequently in half an beyond that. This pathway, after winding upwards a little way, descends to a sandy hollow, in which, so far as I know, are only two cottages. A ridge of low rocks stretches out from this hollow, and on these rocks stands the old lighthouse."

It was not a tempting prospect this-of having to follow this steep, narrow pathway without lantern or guide.

"If I could leave my horses, ma'am,"

began the man.

But at this moment a light shone in gradual approach along the road they had just quitted. It suggested to Madge the cheering possibility of a local guide.

To save time, she advanced to meet the light, and found it to be a big lantern carried by a man of about sixty years of age, clad in the rough serge of a fisher-

In addition to his lantern he carried a basket and sundry bundles, which seemed to suggest the likelihood that he was returning from a day's marketing in a neighbouring village.

He stopped at the unwonted sight of a

lady and post-horses.

Madge accosted him, and stated her

business in a breath.

"I want to get to the other side of these rocks," she said. "Is there any one called Harold Svenson living there? Does he live in the old lighthouse, or at one of the two cottages which I am told are in the hollow below here ?"

Fortunately the man was able to give her the information she wanted. He lived in one of those two cottages, he said, and Harold Svenson lived in the other, using the old lighthouse simply as an ob-

servatory.

"And a mighty lot of queer things he has put i' the light-room, ma'am," he went on to say. "Telescopes—Lord ha' mercy on us!—that show what's going on i' the moon, an' clocks that ha' insides to them big enuff to lie down in; and tell the time they do in such outlandish fashion that naebody can understan' them."

It was easy to secure the services of the old man as guide, so Madge at once dismissed the postboy and his horses, exacting from him the promise that, in consideration of the handsome fee she had paid him, he would not take his horses back to Elstree that night, but would put up at the village on the farther side of Cregan's Head.

A fitful gleam of moonlight enabled her to look at her watch once more. It was just three minutes past the half-hour. | like other Christian fouk."

The Count must be getting dangerously near to Elstree now.

The old fisherman grew loquacious as they trudged along the rocky path. took the weather side, putting Madge under shelter of the rocks. Every now and then the rush of the wind carried his voice away, and she could only get at his

long speeches in snatches.

He had been a fisherman all his life, he said; his name was Thomas Cundy-he pronounced it "Tammas Coondy"- he hadn't a big boat now, but just a little cockle-shell of a thing that he had made for himself. He lived all alone in his little cottage; his wife was dead; his daughters were married. He "did" for himself; made his own clothes-

But here Madge interrupted him, her impatience refusing to be longer restrained.

"Had Harold Svenson lately had a young lady-a foreigner-as a visitor?" she asked.

The old man nodded.

"A young lady, yes. Some fouk wud ha' called her a witch." Here a prolonged shake of the head did duty for a sentence. No one scarce had heard her open her lips, and he was told she had come from they outlandish foreign parts where people didn't know decent English ways.

As they had talked, their path had been sloping downwards. A black chasm of a hollow lay at their feet, out of which a curl of red smoke, puffed this way and that way by the wind, showed where a human

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habitation stood.

Cundy nodded to it.

"That's fro' my chimney," he said. "Svenson an' his wife ha' been abed the last half-hour."

"In bed," repeated Madge, dismayed at the possibility of having to arouse the old couple before she could get speech with

They were standing on a ledge just over Cundy's hut. On the other side of the hollow, at about the same level, a dark square blot indicated Svenson's cottage. From top to bottom of it not a glimmer of light was to be seen. Looking seawards, Madge could make out a black line about sixty yards out at sea—a ridge of sunken rocks, no doubt, for there, out of a mist of dashing spray, arose the gaunt outline of the disused lighthouse.

The old man nodded towards it.

"She's there — the strange young woman," he said, "she's not gone to bed,

"What!" cried Madge, aghast, "she's alone there this terrible night!"

"It's her own doing-naebody could keep her indoors. You see Svenson had her here to help him wi'his books and look up at the stars for him-he's gone blind you know-but directly he set her there to look through his telescope, he couldn't get her awa' fro' it. She crouches over the fire i' the day time i' the lower room, and so soon as the sun sets, she goes up to the light-room and stares at the stars and says her prayers to them as if they were living things. Svenson won't get his book done if he waits for her help I'm thinking. Here we are, ma'am, at Svenson's door. Shall I knock the old people up?"

Madge thought awhile. Why disturb them? Her mission was to Etelka and

Etelka only.

She pointed to the gaunt tower with the white-crested waves dashing furiously

"Can I get there to-night, will your

boat take me?" she asked.

Cundy shook his head. "Better wait till mornen, ma'am," he said. "The wind is gay bad. There are some nasty sharp rocks between this an' the lighthouse; you might walk across to it in fair weather scarce wetting your feet; but i' the dark with this sea!" and again he shook his head.

But Madge had not come all these miles to be turned back by the first glimpse of danger. She determined to be lavish with

her gold again.

"Listen," she said. "I am a rich I'll give you twenty - thirty pounds if you'll take me across to that

lighthouse in your little boat."

The man hesitated a moment, then he shook his head again. "Na, na," he said. "I'm a Christian man, and I've a soul to be savit. I would na risk your life, my leddie, for thirty pounds. If it were only my ain-" here he broke off.

"It will be at my own risk," said Madge, "not yours. See, I will give you fortyfifty-sixty pounds if you'll just row me

across that little bit of water !

"That little bit of water!" The phrase but ill represented the sixty yards of wild sea which lay between them and the lighthouse.

Possibly the prospect of so large a recompense made the old man feel a little less like "a Christian man with a soul to be savit," for after muttering something which the racket of wind and wave do it, never fear, my leddie."

prevented Madge hearing, he bade her wait there in a sheltered corner of the beach while he ran his boat out and saw what he could do.

Minutes seemed to prolong themselves to hours while Madge stood there with that gloomy lighthouse facing her. Once more she pulled out her watch-the hands pointed to five minutes to eight; the Count by this time, most likely, had covered three parts of the road which lay between Elstree and Cregan's Head. Heaven grant that he might miss his way in the dark, and again and again have to retrace his steps!

And it so chanced that exactly at the moment when the dark figure of old Cundy, dragging his boat behind him, appeared on the beach, Lance, with a heavy heart, was pulling up at a road-side inn, halfway between Carstairs and Cregan's Head. with his horse hopelessly lamed by a big

boulder lying in the dark road.

CHAPTER XLVI.

BEFORE she got into that boat Madge had a request to make.

"After you've taken me across that little bit of water," she said, trying to keep up her grand show of courage, "shall you come back here with your boat, or will you stay all night at the lighthouse?"

The old man jerked his head towards his hut, where the dull light of a peat fire

showed through one window.

"I've just put a bit o' bacon on th' peat for my supper; it'll want turnin' by the time I get back," he said, deeming that an all-sufficient answer.

Madge again thanked Heaven for her "Listen," she said. "As I told you before, I am a rich woman, and I don't mind spending my money when I want a thing done. I am Mrs. Cohen from Upton Castle; do you know me by name?"

Candy nodded. Madge's name, as local benefactress, was known all over the

"Very well. Do you wish to earn a hundred pounds by this night's work?" "A hundred pounds!"

"Yes, I will give you that, if, so soon as you get back, you will stave in your boat -before you turn your bacon even."

The old man gave a sorrowful look at

his boat.

"I've had un a long time, it's like a living thing to me, but still-a hundred pounds 's a goodish bit of money. Yes, I'll "And," Madge went on, "soon after you get back a man—a gentleman—will possibly find his way to your hut and want you to help him get across to the lighthouse. You must give him no help whatever. Remember, I have bought your services until the morning. Promise me that not a soul shall cross after me to the lighthouse before then."

The old man was profuse in his promises

and protestations.

Directly he had taken his old boat to pieces, he said, he would turn in, put out his fire and all lights, and then not a soul would find out his hut under the shadow of the shelving rocks. As for Svenson, supposing the gentleman succeeded in finding him out, he would be unable to afford any help for he owned to nothing in the shape of a boat.

Madge's courage nearly gave way when she and Cundy were fairly launched on "that little bit of water." She could never, at her best, boast of much physical courage, and now what with her rapid travelling and the excitement she had gone through that day, she was beginning to feel far from her best. She hid her eyes with her hand, and sat shivering in the stern of the little boat as it bravely mounted crest after crest of the furious waves. Every moment she expected they would be dashed to pieces against some sharp jutting crag of that low ridge of rocks, which stretched away from the beach to the lighthouse.

The old man, however, knew his ground, and kept as straight a course as wind and wave would let him. He had not battled with the elements on that coast for fifty

years for nothing.

As they neared the lighthouse, the dull, red glare of a fire showed through a high narrow slit which served for a window. The old man directed Madge's attention to it, exclaiming that, "they furriners were now without a fire."

Madge drew her hands from her eyes to find that the boat had reached the foot of a flight of steps, which had been let down from another window below the narrow slit to meet the exigencies of the high tide; ingress and egress being no longer possible through the door of the lowest room.

The boat tossed now high on top of a wave, now low in its trough. Drenched to the skin and half-blinded with spray, it was with difficulty, and many a misgiving, that Madge scrambled out of the boat and gained the topmost of that flight of steps.

"Push the wooden flap—it opens on th' inside—it's nowt but a shutter," shouted the old man; and then his boat was tossed away in the darkness, and the rest of his words were lost to her.

Madge, in haste, pushed back the flap and crept in fearful lest the next puff of wind might whirl her away like a leaf into

the blackness beyond.

For a moment, as she stood within, she could hear nothing—see nothing—for the outside racket of the gale still filled her ears, and she had brought into the light-tower with) her a rush of breeze which sent the smoke from the peat fire, that burned upon the hearth, whirling in all directions, and obscured the sullen gleam of the firelight. Other light there was none.

Presently those clouds of smoke parted, and Madge could make out that the room in which she stood was lofty, but circumscribed at the farther end by a flight of steps, which wound away upward into darkness. The lowest steps also were begirt with shadows and whirling wreaths of smoke. Out of those cloudy wreaths a pair of large, luminous eyes seemed for a moment to look out at her, and then disappeared. The haze of the smoke made everything uncertain; but she could feel the silent presence of Etelka McIvor, though her eyes failed to assure her of the fact. Madge thought of the last time that she had seen those large, desolate eyes, and her courage began to fail her. She felt that she must speak or succumb as to a spell.

"Are you there, Miss McIvor? I am Mrs. Cohen. I have come to speak to you on an urgent matter," she said in a voice which even to her own ears sounded

strangely.

Then, from out the smoke wreaths and shadows at the farther end of the room the tall, slenderfigure of Etelka slowly advanced and came to a standstill within two yards of Madge.

Madge stretched out her hands by way

of greeting.

"Forgive me if I am abrupt," she said; "but time is precious to-night."

Etelka did not speak, did not take the proffered hands, and Madge bethought her of other things beside abruptness for which she ought to beg forgiveness.

She let her hands fall to her side.

"I do not wonder that you will not shake hands with me," she said sadly. "I did you a grievous wrong once, but I have come travelling to you to-night in the dark and in the storm, to try and undo that wrong—to make amends for it, if amends

are possible."

Etelka drew a step nearer. The smoke carried by the current was making its way now for the aperture which served as chimney. The red gleam of the fire threw a fitful light across the gloom, and Madge could get a clearer view of the girl's face. Madge thought that she had learnt to know that face; she had seen it rigid and white as carven marble; she had seen it soften and glow as might a carven marble statue flushing into warm life; she had seen it brilliantly beautiful, radiant with hope, as on the night of the ball; and she had seen it darkened with forlornness and despair before that night had come to an end. But the face which confronted her now was none of these.

"Jael, who drove the tent peg into the tired Sisera's forehead, might have had much such a face," Madge had said to herself on the first day that she and Etelka had met. Now, if time had been given her to put her thoughts into words, she

would have said:

"Jael, with a deed of blood in her past, turned prophetess, priestess, seer, might have much such a look as that in her eyes. Is she looking at me or at things in the room which I do not see? Is she talking to me now or answering voices which I do not hear?"

The last thought was caused by Etelka

saying in slow, low tones:

"I knew it would come to-night. I said to myself: 'I may shut myself up here alone, and the winds may make the waves my jailers; all the same, my fate will find me out.' And lo, it comes travelling to me in the darkness and storm!"

Madge's heart sank. This was the woman she wished to inspire with energy to fight a pursuing evil in the strength of

an encompassing love !

"If Fate is finding you out to-night," she said, trying her utmost to speak out bravely, "it must be a glad and happy fate, for I come as a messenger of glad tidings. Listen, I bring you news of Lance. He will be here to-morrow morning—the very first thing I hope—to tell you all over again how truly he loves you, and how that it was only in seeming that he gave you up, when he thought, as we all did, that you had—died at Liverpool."

She faltered over the concluding words. time, immeasu:
But it was impossible to avoid abruptness. promise me!"

Necessity was laid upon her to say all that she had to say rapidly. In truth, she thought little of the manner of her speech in her eagerness to unfold to Etelka's view the bright things the future might have in store for her, before she told the evil tidings of Count Palliardini, his threats and pursuit.

But it seemed as if Madge might as well have shouted her good tidings to the stone walls which shut them in, as into Etelka's ears, for still as a statue the girl stood, with her large, dreamy eyes looking beyond, not at, the flushed, eager face which con-

fronted hers.

Madge lost her self-control. She sprang forward, seizing both Etelka's hands in

hers, and crying out impetuously:

"Oh, if one came to me, bringing the glad news I bring to you, I would not stand as you do, saying never a word? I would go down into the very dust and kiss the messenger's feet, and then I would jump up and clap my hands and shout for joy! Do you not understand me? I come from Lance, as Lance's messenger."

Something of animation shone in the

cold, pale face.

"You come as Lance's messenger, you say," she said, in the same slow tones as before; "then take a message back from me to him. Tell him that since I saw him last a revelation has come to me—the stars have taught me things that they never taught me before."

"Oh, do not talk of the stars now,"

broke in Madge, impetuously. Etelka held up her hand.

"Hush," she said, "you are a messenger, you say, therefore you must take as well as bring a message. Promise me you will."

"I promise," answered Madge, strangely impressed with the solemnity of Etelka's manner. It might have been that of a person, who, about to depart on a very long journey, gives minute and special directions as to what is to be done during

his absence.

"Say to him," Etelka went on, "that, since I have been here in this lonely place, I have spent hours looking up at the stars through a grand telescope, and things have changed to me. Tell him I have seen the house of life in the heavens, and I have seen the house of death; but I have seen something else which has made life and death fade into nothingness. I have seen Eternity there—immeasurable time, immeasurable space—tell him that—promise me!"

"I promise," answered Madge, a sense of awe creeping over her, for Etelka's manner recalled now less that of a person about to depart on a long journey, than that of one about to undertake the longest journey of all—that journey from which there is no return.

There fell a pause. Outside sounded the solemn sound of wind calling to wave, wave answering to wind; within, those two women might have heard each breath the other drew as they stood silently facing each other in the dim

light.

Madge felt that she had succumbed to Etelka's strange powers of fascination, and to the weirdness of the scene, and had but ill done her work. Why should she, indeed, consent to carry Etelka's messages to Lance when—as she hoped—he would be here on the morrow, and receive them for himself? One half, also, of her mission remained unfulfilled; her bad news had yet to be told—perhaps it might make a deeper impression than her good appeared to have done—so, making a great effort, she broke the silence, and said:

"There is some one else I must speak to you about besides Lance, for he, also, is on his way to you to-night—some one whom

you have no reason to love."

Etelka started, a change of expression passing over her face.

"Count Palliardini?" she exclaimed, under her breath.

Madge's reply was cut off by a heavy and prolonged puff of wind, which must have sent the sea dashing over the top of the lighthouse; it set the wooden flap, which served at once as window and shutter, rattling as if it were being shaken on the outside by a human hand.

Madge's fancy instantly conjured up a vision of Count Palliardini having succeeded somehow in obtaining a boat, and now standing outside on the steps seeking means of entry. She bethought her of the possibility of fastening down that wooden

flap.

"Is there bolt or fastening to it?" she asked, at the same time crossing to the window to ascertain for herself what means of securing it could be improvised.

Etelka followed her. Madge pushed back the flap, and looked out into the darkness, in order to assure herself that her fears were groundless.

The salt spray dashed in her face, the wind sang in her ears. Clouds were scudding rapidly over the face of the wan moon. Not a light was to be seen on the shore in either cottage, and the red curl of smoke from Cundy's fire had disappeared; so Madge dismissed her fears, concluding that the old man had kept and meant to keep his precise to her

keep his promise to her.

A dark mass of cloud at that moment separating, a fuller stream of light poured down from the faint moon; a receding wave, also, for a brief space left the air free from spray, and Madge could get a clearer view of the beach. In that brief space she saw something else beside the black outlines of coast and cliff—the figure of a man standing just where she had stood waiting for Cundy to bring his boat round. Then clouds swept over the moon once more, and sea and shore became again one dark expanse.

Madge knew that Etelka must have seen that man's figure as clearly as she had. She let fall the wooden shutter, and turned impetuously to the girl, taking

both her hands in her own.

"Do not fear," she cried, "he can't get to us to-night. Cundy, at my request, has staved in his boat, and there is no other. And to-morrow Lance will be—must be—here!"

Etelka's hands were cold and trembling;

her breathing came thick and fast.

"He will come—he will be here presently," she said, in low, hurried tones. "I know that man—he will lose his life—his soul—but let go his purpose never!"

Madge noted with thankfulness that the girl did not say now, as she had so often

before, "It is fate-I bow to it."

"I tell you it is impossible—impossible," Madge repeated, "for him to get here till the tide runs out, which will not be till morning. Oh, Etelka, have you no courage? How can you be so faint-hearted, when you have true and strong friends to take care of you, and such a bright future before you!"

All Etelka's reply was to free her hands from Madge's clasp, lift the wooden shutter, and peer out into the darkness

once more.

And this is what they saw when, after a moment's waiting, the faint moonlight again filtered through the drifting clouds—the man standing in precisely the same spot on the beach, throwing off his heavy overcoat and boots, and tightening and drawing together his other garments. He meant to swim.

He, the dandy who carried a pocket-

comb, who had hands whiter than a woman's, and fit for no rougher work than the twanging of a guitar, was going to dare death in the darkness rather than defer his purpose by even a few hours.

A low cry escaped Etelka's lips. Madge threw her arms round her.

"Promise me," she cried, "that you will not be frightened by his threats; that you will say 'No' to his entreaties! Think of Lance now on his road to you! Think of all the happiness that lies waiting for you!"

Etelka freed herself from Madge's arms. "He will drown!" she said, in a strained, unnatural tone. "He will be dashed to pieces against the low ridge of rocks in the darkness!"

Even as she spoke black masses of clouds rolled up from the horizon, and the moon was gone.

She walked away to the fire, which still

burned low on the hearth.

Madge wondered if she were going to take away the man's one chance by quenching that fire—it still threw a fitful gleam, which must have shone in the outside darkness through the glazed slit in the wall.

But the next moment showed her that Etelka had another purpose. With her foot she stirred the embers together, then, picking up a short pine-bough which lay on the hearth, she ignited it, and carried it, a blazing torch, to the window at which Madge still stood, and passed through it on to the outside wooden steps.

The life which she had once before attempted to destroy she would now do

her utmost to save.

To the last hour of her life Madge never lost the vision of that tall, slender figure in shadowy, grey garments standing out there in the windy darkness, with flaming torch held high above her head. The wind tossed her black hair in disorder about her shoulders; the torch threw fitful light on the beautiful, white face, with wide-open, desolate eyes, and mouth slowly settling into hard, rigid lines.

Not a second Hero assuredly! For the priestess of Venus lighted the man she loved across the dark waters, but this one

the man she hated !

And as Madge stood dumbly gazing at her, there came a sudden terrific blast which seemed to shake the lighthouse to its very foundations, and turned the solemn sound of wind and wave into one wild turmoil of rushing, dashing fury, as of some fiend-orchestra let loose upon creation.

The wooden shutter was wrenched from Madge's hand, the embers of the peat-fire were swept from the hearth, and the room for a moment seemed filled with whirling clouds of smoke and salt spray, which came rushing in through the now unshuttered window.

Something else fell upon Madge's ear beside the roar of the gale and the dash of the waves—a human cry, a crash, and then a great stillness, which seemed something other than the sudden lulling of the

wind.

And when, half-blinded with smoke and spray, and with a great terror at her heart, Madge ventured once more to peer out into the darkness, no slender figure holding high a flaring torch was to be seen, nor dark form battling with the angry waves; all that met her eye was the great, black, desolate expanse of furious ocean; nothing else.

"I did my best, Lance, for you—for her," said Madge as she ended the terrible story which, with quivering lips and many a halt,

she told him on the morrow.

But Lance stood looking at her, saying never a word, struck into silence, not alone by the greatness of the tragedy, but by the magnitude of Madge's love for him, which, until that moment, he had never measured.

EPILOGUE.

Six telegrams from Sir Peter Critchett: No. 1.—To the Rev. Joshua Parker,

Chadwick Coal Pits, Durham:

"I know you will be glad to hear that the marriage of my adopted son and Mrs. Cohen—delayed a year ago—took place this morning. Excuse haste; my hands are very full."

No. 2.-To Mrs. Lancelot Clive, Hôtel

des Anglais, Nice:

"So glad you remembered to send Lady Judith the patent incubators from Paris. I start at once for Redesdale to see that things are going on all right there."

No. 3.—To same:

"Arrived safely at Redesdale. Lovely weather."

No. 4.—To same:

"Glad I came here. Lots of things want seeing to. The weather-cock on the top of the village church has stuck at north-east."

No. 5.—To Lancelot Clive, Esq, Hôtel des Anglais, Nice:

"Forget to tell you I went to see

Stubbs, at Millbank, the other day. Poor fellow—truly penitent — must look after him when he comes out."

No. 6.—To same:

"Don't let Madge worry about the weather-cock, I'll have it set going before you get back. Will telegraph again tomorrow."

MISTLETOE AND HOLLY.

TIME out of mind it has been the jolly custom of the English people to deck their houses and churches with evergreens at Christmas.

Howbeit, four or five centuries ago, almost the only greeneries to be got were holly and ivy—not counting mistletoe, which is not "greens" at Covent Garden; for laurels, and all the other shrubs originally exotic, though they now flourish as natives, were not found in England.

Box there was, of course; but then it only grew in certain places. At present, it only grows wild at Boxhill, in Surrey. And though yew was plentiful enough, it was looked upon from its associations as an ill-omened, uncanny tree, not to be

lightly brought into houses.

To have stuck a branch of yew in the hall over a reveller's head at Yuletide, would have been as much as to suggest that, merry and snug as he sat there then, he might soon be lying in the churchyard with a whole tree of it waving over him.

Ivy, too, seems somehow to have been held an inferior—a vulgar, base-born sort of tree, compared to gentleman holly; perhaps for no better reason than that from its humble limpness of character it could only be dealt with in wreaths and festoons, which lazy people thought it trouble to make, whereas the bold holly stood up well and stiffly wherever it was ordered, like a sturdy spearman under arms.

Witness the old song of "Holly and Ivy," of the time of Henry the Sixth:

Nay, Ivy, nay,
Hyt shal not be, I wys,
Let Holy have the maystery,
As the manner ys.

Holy stand in the halle, So fayre to behold; Ivy stand wythout the dore, She ys ful sore a-cold.

And again an old carol praises the goodbreeding of the holly:

Here comes the Holly, that is so gent.

However, by the end of the seventeenth century, many kinds of foreign shrubs had been introduced into England, and become common, so that old Herrick could sing of

> The holly and bay, In their green array, Spread over the walls and dishes,

But at the present time poor holly is much fallen from his former high estate in the churches at Christmas time; and, indeed, in many is quite neglected.

Ultra-refined people think he has a vulgar smack about him of inn-parlours

and plum-pudding.

High art is to the fore in things ecclesiastical, as in all else, and church decorations mean all sorts of æsthetic and hieroglyphic floral emblems and devices, with gold and silver foil, red and yellow cloth, cotton wool, and no end of pots of greenhouse-flowers. The general effect is doubtless charming, and does the greatest credit to the invention and fingers of the fair artists; but it would have driven an old-fashioned sexton to imitate the man of Thessaly in nursery rhymes, and scratch his eyes out by taking a header into the next holly-bush.

Those whose memories can carry them back thirty years, know how differently

things were done then.

The only decorator was the sexton aforesaid, or clerk, with a schoolboy or two to help him, and the decorations were conducted on the simple plan of sticking branches of holly, large or small, into gimlet holes made along the tops of the old high pews; and the chief glory centered, not about the altar, as at the present day, but around the pulpit, where the "christmas" was stuck so high and thick that the preacher looked like a Jackin-the-green, or the ram caught in a thicket. Sometimes he even nearly disappeared altogether till Candlemas, which was the proper time for taking the holly

The system was certainly a rough one, from a strictly artistic point of view; but it had the merit of following the "wildness of nature." Occasionally, too, it was productive of various unrehearsed effects. For instance, in the evening service, when the greenery had got pretty dry, the flaring flame of a tallow candle or oil lamp—there was no gas in any country church in those days—would set a bough on fire with a loud crackling of leaves and an aromatic smoke, to the discomfiture of the

inmates of the pew and the delight of the

schoolboys.

But the sexton—who was perhaps standing with his back to the blazing fire which he had just stirred up in the large open stove contiguous to the Squire's pew, and critically enjoying the sermon - would come promptly up, and, tearing the burning branch out of the gimlet hole, cast it on the stone floor, and, as he himself expressed it, "stomp it out."

What pleased the little girls much more than the miniature bonfire—which rather frightened them - was when a robin, which had wandered into the church, attracted by the greenery, flew about twittering and perching from place to place-now on a bough on the pulpit, now on the cover of the holly-wreathed font, with an expression in his twinkling black eyes which plainly said: "Any crumbs?"

No one who has not been to Covent Garden Market, at Christmas time, before daylight in the morning, can have any idea of the immense quantity of holly and

mistletoe which comes to London.

For a full week before Christmas Day, great waggons, vans, and carts, carrying their towering loads, keep on arriving, and as fast as they arrive they are unloaded, and depart to make room for more.

Nearly all the holly is home-grown, and comes chiefly from Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, and a few other counties, in whose woods, and hedgerows, and deep, tangled lanes the bill-hook has been ruthlessly wielded by strong hands for a fortnight past.

The holly is divided into three qualities: that which has plenty of berries, that which has a few, and that which has none. Of course, the quantity of berries varies from one season to another; according to the old saying, when there are a great many, it is a sign of a hard winter.

Holly is of two sexes, male and female; the former with few or no berries and very strong, prickly leaves; the latter - as becomes the softer sex-with pliant leaves, few prickles, and, in favourable years, thickly adorned with bright scarlet berries.

There is also white holly, very pretty, but not much in market request.

Holly is one of the hardiest of trees, and even flourishes in the gardens of smoky London; and what is still more to its credit, keeps its leaves glossy and clean. It makes the best of living fences, and its stems are so strong, and array of close-set spears so formidable, that few animals will try to go through it.

On the sheltered and sunny side of an old holly-hedge, perhaps eight or nine feet high, and as many thick, it is always warm, even when the keenest winter winds are blowing. It puts forth its small white

blossoms in May.

The "greenwood tree" of the old poets is thought by some to have been the holly, which anciently grew often in whole woods together. There is probably more wild holly in Surrey than in any other county. The wood is valued by the turner, and the engraver finds it a good substitute for box; the young straight stems make good walking-sticks.

Though there is plenty of mistletoe in England, not much of it finds its way to London. What does come is from the cider counties, where it grows on the

apple-trees. But the chief supply is from the north of France, Normandy and Brittany, the people of which parts propagate and cultivate it in the great orchards as carefully as the apple-trees themselves; in fact, you may see whole acres of trees given up to mistletoe.

In consequence of this careful cultivation, the French parasite is much finer than its English cousin, and worth more money. It is gathered, packed in great crates, and shipped in steamer to Southampton, whence the South-Western brings

it up to London.

The price varies from fifteen to twentyfive shillings a crate, according to quality. It is a ticklish commodity, for it soon withers if left exposed to very keen wind or hard frost after it has been cut. It is soon damaged, too, and its berries easily knocked off, by rough usage; moreover, the French farmers have, it is said, a trick of putting good "stuff" on the top and outside of the crate, and filling in with "rubbish," so that it behoves a buyer to be wary, or he may lose by his bargain. But, as a rule, Covent Garden buyers are a very wary class indeed.

The old school-books of our childhood used to tell us that mistletoe "grew on the oak, and was much venerated by the

Druids.

Well, it was venerated by the Druids, and it did not grow on the oak, or, at least, so seldom that when it was found there it made a red-letter day in their calendar.

The Arch-Druid was immediately sent for to come and cut it off with a golden But what happened to the man who had found it nobody knows, for the ancient writers have not told us. Perhaps he was as great a hero as a modern bowler

who has done the "hat trick."

Kissing under the mistletoe is a very old custom, invented probably by the Druids. Some say that a man may kiss a maiden as many times as there are berries on the bough, provided she consents to it. Blackbirds, thrushes, starlings, and other birds love the berries of both mistletoe and holly. Poor things! how unhappy they must be to see their winter store carried away !

The great business time at Covent Garden is from three to six in the

morning.

Most Londoners consider this the middle of the night in winter; but the market is crowded; gas flaring; porters hurrying with huge burthens; dealers inspecting "stuff;" holly and mistletoe everywhere; waggoners pulling at their horses; hundreds of vehicles, from great railway vans and carts down to costermongers' barrows; shouting, chaffing, swearing !-yet nearly every one, on the whole, good-humoured, considering the enormous amount of work to be done and the short time in which to do it,

Now the sales begin.

Twenty auctioneers, every one with his desk and porter beside him, form each the centre of a crowd of eager bidders.

"Now then, first lot!" and the panting porter bangs down a great crate of mistletoe, by some miracle, on nobody's toes. "How much?"

"Twelve shillings, thirteen, fifteen,

seventeen, nineteen, twenty !"

"Yours."

And down comes the hammer.

" Next lot ! '

This is a great bundle of holly, or perhaps young firs for Christmas trees.

So it goes on without stopping, till the sales are over, and the buyers, who all pay ready money (no credit), begin to clear away their lots.

About six o'clock the costers and "little men" come in, to pick up odds and ends at low prices; and in a couple of hours more the market will begin to look empty and deserted.

How all the thickly packed waggons, carts, and barrows have got safely away is more wonderful even than how they came in.

Soon the tide will begin to set back again, and the same wonderful scene will | the elfin music was loud, and Niel and his

be repeated day after day till Christmas Eve is over.

Holly fetches, wholesale, from eighteenpence to six shillings a bundle, according

to size and quality.

The poorest working-man's wife, when she goes out on Christmas Eve to do her shopping, will, by hook or by crook, have a penny to spare out of her slender purse to buy a spray or two of red-berried holly, which will be carried home in triumph, and stuck up in their room to make it, as she says, "Christmas-like."

LITTLE NIEL'S RED MAN.

LITTLE NIEL lived in the loveliest and wildest district of Donegal, on the banks of Mulroy, an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean, which looked like a lake, with gigantic mountains all around, and sloping farms creeping yearly further up their sides. Mountain ponies climbed these steep fields like goats.

There were beautiful green islands of every shape conceivable, sleeping upon the water's breast-islands sacred to the seals, a soft-eyed race that loved to bask on summer evenings, and that took to the waves when the fishermen passed by singing Irish songs; and islands given up to

sea-birds.

The home of Niel was opposite Bird Island, so called because the gulls built their nests upon it so close together that it was first white with eggs, and then grey with fluffy fledglings; and, later, dense fleets of white gulls covered the water, gently tossing up and down like fairy boats.

It can be imagined that this island was dear to the heart of every boy in the country; and of course it had many attractions for Niel. Nature was so charming that the landscape made the educated traveller dream of fairyland; and, as his foot pressed cushions of wild thyme, and he plucked oxlips and the nodding violet, he was fain to connect the spot with our great poet's fair imagination.

Yet little though he believed it, the

place was a veritable fairyland!

Just below Niel's house was the "gentle thorn," a gnarled and lichen-grown hawthorn, and on summer evenings it was lighted up as if every old knob was on fire, while flutes and pipes of a silver tone sounded gaily.

On a May Eve, or Halloween, especially,

brothers and sisters watched little, nimble

fingers moving round the tree.

One day, as Niel's mother and her two servants were spinning at the fireside, a tiny woman entered, and said: "Wad you like me to gie you a hand wi' your spinning?"

"Ay, surely, an' thank you kindly, good woman," replied Ellie McColgan, without observing that the visitor had not wished

the house "good luck."

The small woman sat down at once and began to spin, working in so marvellous a manner that she got through more work in an hour than the mistress and the two servants put together. She was thanked and begged to prolong her visit, and every one in the house treated her as an honoured guest. The strongest cup of tea, the warmest corner in the chimney-nook were given her. Thus she lived a member of the family, nursing the children, spinning hanks of yarn, doing many a hand's turn about the farm; and a week went by. But she disappeared as suddenly as she

Some time afterwards the master of the house wakened very early, and, looking out of bed, saw her sitting at the fire.

"Welcome, good woman," cried he,
"I hope you are come to stop wi' us?"

"Na, na; I was just waiting till you wakened. I'm come for my wages."

"Troth, my decent woman, I'm right glad to hear that, for you're deserving o' wages. What shall I gi'e you?"

"Naething but a plate o' meal; but gi'e it quick, for they are waiting on me out-

bye."

McColgan jumped up and gave her the meal, and would have gone with her to the door, but she pushed him back, and hurried away, clapping the door behind her. He heard whispering and trampling outside the house. These sounds ceased; and, plucking up courage, he lifted the latch and looked out. No one was to be The rising sun was gilding the waters of Mulroy; touching the islands with green, white, and crimson; lighting up Crohan and the chapel, and the dark mountain range of Knockalla. His eve fell on Bird Island far beneath him, then swept the wide landscape, resting longest on the winding road to the left, where the highway from the broad Atlantic wound past Kindrum, under the lofty mountains of the Carne. Failing to discover any trace of his late visitor, he went back to awake the sleeping family.

"It's well we were kindly wi' thon old woman," said he, "for I'm certain sure she's ane o' them we willna name."

Soon after this adventure little Niel was playing on Bird Island. McColgan happened to be employed in ploughing his field near the gnarled hawthorn, when he heard shrill cries, and, recognising his son's voice, he ran down the bank and crossed the shingly neck of land that separated Bird Island from the mainland at low tide. The pretty boy stood watching his jacket floating away on the Lough, and he was crying bitterly.

"The saints be between us an' harm! What ails the wean!" cried McColgan.

"The red man! The red man!" sobbed Niel in lively terror, and he would say no more. His father had heard from old people that the fairy king appeared as a red man, and that when the queen sent him to steal a mortal child, he first took some article of its clothing away with him. All this flashed into his mind as he saw the boy's jacket swimming away. He plunged into the Lough, caught up the jacket, and brought it to shore; then he took the frightened child home.

"Ellie, dear," said he, "we be to watch the wean careful, for I'm afeared the gentry has set their hearts on him. Dinna

be letting him outbye his lone."

"But where's my wee, nice, new jacket,

father?" interrupted the child.

The jacket had been hanging over his arm as he came up the brae. It was gone! snatched away by invisible hands. The fairy king had a hostage now—he would yet have the little captive! The terrified parents looked at one another, and were silent. A sharp look-out was kept by the whole neighbourhood for the "wee, red man;" but Bird Island seemed to be left to the gulls and the plover—no fairy king appeared.

the mother, twining Niel's yellow curls round her hard-worked fingers. The jacket was taken and the child was to follow, so all their watching was in vain. One evening when the stirabout was being ladled out for supper, Niel was missing. Paddy and Kate, chubby Grace, and broadfaced Andy, were all seated round the hearth, porringer in hand; but no Niel joined the party. "He didna go back to Bird Island, for he was too 'feared,' "said his parents; "but anyway he's lost to us."

Many suns rose over fair Mulroy, and Niel did not return. At length Halloween came round. McColgan was on the point of going to a merry-making, and had his Sunday coat hanging over his arm, with his Prayer-Book in the pocket. The moon shone as he opened the door. He heard unwonted sounds-the galloping of horses-the cracking of whips. A cavalcade was advancing. All at once he recollected that the fairies were supposed to ride in full force on Halloween. if his lost child should be in their company? As the second horse passed by, he threw his coat upon the ground before it. Something fell on the coat, and at that instant the train of horses come to a standstill. But where were now the steeds with strange, quaint riders, that had come forward looming so large in the moonlight? They had all vanished, and only a heap of withered ben weeds lay on the road.

McColgan saw Niel lying on the coat. He caught him up, and hurried into the house. The rejoicing in the cottage may be imagined—how the mother wept for joy, and kissed her beautiful child; how the father trembled from the excitement of his eerie adventure; and how Grace and Andy, Paddy and Kate, who had won no fairy hearts, crowded round the hero of

"An' did they do naething on you, jewel?" asked Ellie.

"Naething ava, mammy."

"Where were you anyway, Niel, avick?" "I was in a grand, lovely place, far nicer nor his reverence, Father Daniel's parlour; an' there was plenty o' wee childer playin' an' dancin', an' they had cakes an' sweeties an' lozengers; an' oh! the bonnie plays-the bonnie dies!"

"But you're no sorry to come back to your poor mammy, son?" questioned Ellie, wistfully. Niel would not answer this question, and Ellie noticed that he was very restless for some time, as if his baby breast was conscious of a vague yearning after his elfin companions and their "bonnie plays." But his uneasiness wore away by degrees, and he again ate his stirabout with appetite, and again played happily with his ragged brothers Having been won back and sisters. from the fairy king, he was ever after secure from his wiles and spells.

There were many "gentle" places on Joe McGinty's farm in the parish of Myroe; and he had been warned more than once that he had invisible neighbours. His mother and grandmother had had day the mother left the room.

visits from the "good people;" they had gladly shared their milk and meal with the king and queen, and their men had always been careful to give the "gentle places" a wide berth when they were ploughing the land.

Joe, however, forgot the good advice of his friends. He did not much believe in the fairies, and he wished to improve his farm by stubbing out a few whins, or blasting a few rocks each year. His wife, too, was pretty sharp with her dairywoman for daring to leave the "strippings," or richest milk of her best cow, for the "gentry." No wonder that rashness like

this terrified the farm-servants.

"The master an' mistress 'll rue it yet," said they in frightened tones. They remembered their prognostications when Mrs. McGinty had a son, and reiterated their warnings more seriously than ever. "You be to watch thou wean careful, for he's bonnie, an' them we willna name 'ill be setting their hearts on him. leave him his lone in the house without putting the tongs across the cradle." It never struck the mother that she might have neglected to profit by this friendly warning, when a sudden change came over her child. He grew pale and thin, peevish and elf-like; yet it did not strike Mrs. McGinty that a horrible misfortune had Mother-like, she only loved happened. him the more because he was wakeful by night, and cross and fretful by day.

Little Corkey was a spiteful, ugly, peevish urchin; but he never wore out her patient love, though his father often dashed out of the house in a rage when his wails grew desperate, and though the servants longed to give him a pinch or a

slap when he provoked them.

Corkey was three years old when a tailor came to work at the farmhouse; and while he was seated cross-legged on the table in the kitchen window, stitching the farmer's breeches, he observed Corkey in his cradle, playing with straws and feathers, and pining and fretting the while. Corkey liked "brochanrye," a species of gruel sweetened with treacle; and his thin, shrill voice was often heard calling, now angrily, now wheedlingly:

"Mammy, oh! ahorkey, Brochanrye for Corkey!"

a call his mother was never deaf to.

The tailor used his eyes and ears, and he came to a conclusion about Corkey.

diately Corkey set up his fretful, distracting wail, varied by cries of :

"Mammy, oh! ahorkey, Brochanrye for Corkey!"

"Hold your tongue, wichel, or I'll rise an' go to you," said the tailor.

The urchin grinned, and taking a violin from beneath his pillow, said:

"I'll play you a braw tune, if you

promise not to tell the old cat."

Such wild music! such fantastic reels and jigs! The tailor flung down his cloth and needle, and sprang from the table to the floor, where he danced madly, while the malicious elf laughed and played, and laughed again.

"Stop, wichel, stop; I canna breathe!" cried the unhappy dancer, clutching by the table, the dresser, the window, in vain efforts to stop. But his breathless cries for mercy were useless. Corkey played more wildly than ever, until he caught his mother's returning footsteps. Then he quickly hid the fiddle, saying:

"Whisht, not a word; the old cat's

coming."

And just as Mrs. McGinty entered, his

fretful wailing recommenced.

"Here, darling, jewel, honey, whisht wi' your crying," said the poor woman, "here's your ain mammy, an' ye'll get brochanrye now."

"Dinna gie the wee divil one sup!" cried the tailor; and he told her exactly what had happened during her absence.

"It's a lie, goodman. Come to your

mammy, Corkey, avick !"

And Mrs. McGinty tried to clasp the fighting, wailing creature to her breast. But the farmer came in at that moment, and the tailor repeated his tale to him.

"I ha' heerd the like frae the old people," he said meditatively, scratching

his head.

"Weel-a-weel! Let me set Corkey on the riddle and shake him over the fire, an' ye'll soon see what he is," returned the tailor. "I'll no hurt him, I promise yez; an' if he's what he should be, back he'll

go into the cradle."

Mrs. McGinty demurred; but her husband consenting, the riddle was produced, the struggling Corkey was set upon it, and it was shaken over the turf fire in the wide chimney. Corkey clenched his fists at his horrified mother, made a spiteful grimace, sprang up the chimney, and was

lighted that the tyrant was gone; but as to the poor mother, although she was obliged to confess that her own child must be in fairyland, and that Corkey had been merely an elfin changeling, she mourned her tormentor very bitterly, and carried an empty heart with her to her grave.

Joseph Ried had bought the goodwill of a farm, and, well pleased, went to take possession of it. The land was in good order for the most part; but a field before the farmhouse door was disfigured by a stunted hawthorn of great age. Joseph resolved to get rid of it without delay, and notwithstanding the grave warnings of his next door neighbour, Matt Quin, he cut it down, stubbed out the roots, and burnt the branches. On the following day, he put his new horse into the plough, and proceeded to turn up the soil, Quin and his wife and children looking on, as well The third as Mrs. Ried and her servants. time the horse passed the spot where the old tree had stood, he dropped down dead.

"I told you how it wad be if you stirred the 'gentle bush,'" said Quin. "I told you I had seen the good people dancin' round it as long as I mind-ay, an' as long

as my father minds, too."

"Pooh, pooh! Good people, indeed!"

mocked the new farmer.

But various strange experiences were to convince him that his farm was haunted. One day he went out to cut furze in a ditch, and he was working steadily, when a child's head rose up suddenly, as if just under his sickle. He drew his hand back with a shudder, calling out:

"Be off, Micky Quin, ye young rascal!

I might ha' cut the head off ye!"

He felt sure the child must be one of his neighbour Quin's sons. The sprite sank back, laughing in a taunting manner,

to be succeeded by another head.
"Dan Quin!" he now cried, aghast,

"was it your head I was near cutting off that time?" Malicious laughter again reechoed from the ditch, and a third head appeared. "Henry Quin!" he exclaimed, "I'll tell your father on ye;" and he took his hook, and went home baffled. didna' get cutting the whins," he com-plained to his wife, "for that wee divils o' Qain's was aye in my road, putting up their ugly heads out o' the ditch to taunt

"The Quins, man alive! Why, Quin's The farmer and the servants were de- childer was all in this kitchen a minute ago fleeching the los

ago, fleeching the loan o' we'er bakeboard for their mother. Leave the place even at a loss, Joe, dear, for you ha' offended them

we willna name."

Too plainly did his fairy enemies show their dislike to the unlucky man in a hundred ways. His teacup was upset on its way to his lips; his morsel was snatched off his fork; his nightly rest was disturbed by pinches and plucks from unseen fingers. The most vexatious hindrances happened to him in his work. Things were mislaid; time was wasted; he could not get on. Hardworking though he was, he could make little progress. He was harrowing in his field one day with a young mare, when, as he turned the first row, a sound of sweet, gay music burst forth, and he saw a party of dancers in the next field. The music was everywhere. The pipes and flutes sounded now as if above his head; again their strains came soft and muffled, as though from underground.

The mare snorted and trembled; she broke loose from him, and dragging the harrow after her, dashed towards the gate. But the farmer had no thoughts of following her, for his eyes were glued to the bonnie sight of the whirling figures; his ears filled with the entrancing strains. Toil was forgotten—he thought neither of broken harrow, nor of runaway steed—

only of the scene before his eyes.

Everybody in the "town"—that is, the little group consisting of the farmhouse and cottier houses—heard the music, and came running out. Quin, and his wife, and children came, so did Mrs. Ried and her servants, and all stood near Joseph, listening, enchanted. But though all heard the bewitching music, none saw the fairy dancers except Joseph.

Not a man was able to catch the mare until the strains ceased, and then she was led to her stable with broken knees.

The Halloween after this adventure Joseph and his wife were returning home from a jovial night's merrymaking with their cousins at Rallagh, three miles from the haunted farm. They were burdened with a present—a quarter of veal, their cousins having killed a calf. It was a misty night—the air cold, and very still. The couple had to cross a bridge. The quarter of veal was on Joseph's shoulder when he stepped upon the bridge, when he reached the other side it was gone. There was much disappointment and mutual condolence, and the tormented pair got home in the lowest spirits, whispering,

"It was them we willna name—it was them we willna name."

"You be to quet the farm," said Matt Quin, "for 'they' will gi'e you nae life ava."

Joseph pondered over this serious advice, and a time came when he was forced to act upon it. His little daughter Fanny was three years old when she began to stray beyond the confines of the farmyard, and there was no account of her for hours at a time.

"Where were you, darling, all this long time?" asked the mother, who, with a baby at the breast, and multitudinous cares to occupy and worry her, was not able to run after the child. "I was out bye there wi' the nice, green-coated, wee childer," lisped Fanny.

"What wee childer, jewel?"

"Oh, just those nice anes," smiled the little one.

"I'll tell your father to beat you if you go near them again," said Mrs. Ried, in alarm. But Fanny did not heed her; she was often missing. Voices were heard in the house as well as in the yard; the silvery lisping of the pet child was heard as if in reply, and the alarm of the parents became overwhelming. But Joseph was a slow man, a very "slack" man his schoolmaster had been wont to call him in his childish days, and a "slack" man he was in his middle age. He was slow to act upon his convictions, and so the days ran on.

At length in the height of summer there came an evening when there was no account of Fanny. She did not come home to supper; her bed was empty. The young Quins were questioned, and confessed that they had seen her playing in the low meadow with a number of children dressed in green, and she seemed very happy.

"Why but you called the father or me?" asked Mrs. Ried.

"I took nae thought."

"Oh, wichel, why but you took thought, an' this sick an a gentle place?" exclaimed the mother, bursting into a passion of tears. Her eyes never rested on Fanny again. The only news of her she ever obtained was from the little Quins, who now and again came in with wide opened eyes to tell that they had seen the greencoated children in the meadow making garlands, or chasing one another, and that Fanny was with them.

condolence, and the tormented pair got home in the lowest spirits, whispering, farmer, sighing dismally. Soon after he

sold the goodwill of the farm, and saying farewell to the Quins, and to the low meadow where Fanny was supposed to dwell in mysterious bondage among the green-coated children, he took his infant son and sailed from Derry quay to the new world. It is not known that the "good people" have ever yet crossed the wide Atlantic, and it is therefore confidently hoped that Joseph's dangers and misfortunes are over.

THE SOMERS TOWN BLIND AID SOCIETY.

"THE hand of Charity is nowhere so open as in this country; but is often paralysed for the want of being well

directed."

This paragraph appeared in the first volume of "Household Words," in the number for the week ending July the twentieth, 1850, in an article on "Ragged Dormitories," one of several which appeared that year in that periodical on the same subject. Now, it may seem at first sight, that there can be no very close connection between Ragged Schools and the Somers Town Blind Aid Society; yet a very strong link exists in the fact that Mr. Starey, the founder of the Ragged School Union, who gave much valuable information to the writer of those articles, is the Treasurer of the Blind Aid Society, and his energetic and indefatigable wife is Hon. Secretary; and it is mainly due to their kind, untiring efforts, that the poor people belonging to it receive so much comfort and benefit.

Some of the objects of the Society are to help the blind poor by providing medical advice and medicine free of cost; to send those who are ailing for short periods to the country or sea-side; to grant small pensions; and to supplement and strengthen all efforts at self-help. Then, when any are in distress, aid is given in money, food, clothing, and so on, and many other ways are found of helping these

poor, afflicted people.

The majority of the blind belonging to this Society having become so in adult life, the poverty attendant on their blindness is terrible; and the opportunities of earning a livelihood are very few. when a man has worked at one trade up to middle age, it is extremely difficult for him to learn any other, when it is taken | sees shown to each other by the poor. It

into consideration that he has lost his sight; yet many of them have been taught to cane chairs, and to make mats, baskets, and such articles, and can earn a small weekly sum by this kind of work. They are visited in their own houses by a small band of lady visitors, who read to them, and give them help and advice; and the readings are not confined to religious subjects, but a large range of literature is gone over, the blind choosing their own books; which, as a rule, are works of Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, and other popular writers. Newspapers, too, are greatly appreciated; one man recently remarked in making his choice, "My favourite authors are Saint Luke and the "Daily Telegraph."

But the great feature of the Society is the meeting which is held every Thursday evening in the Aldenham Street Board Schools, near King's Cross Station, and these are so much enjoyed that, as a rule, it is only in cases of illness that there are Mrs. Starey generally any absentees. provides a very attractive programme, and nowhere could there be found a more attentive and appreciative audience. The evening is begun by singing a hymn, followed by a short prayer, offered by one of the blind, in which all heartily join. Readings, recitations, lectures, and music form the entertainment, and it is a most pleasant sight to see the happy, interested expression on all their faces, while, for a time, they are thus led to forget their many troubles and great affliction. They all look forward to these evenings, and show keen enjoyment and intelligent interest in what is done for them; and it is quite a pleasure to hear them, during the following week, relate what they have heard from either Mr. R. M. Ballantyne, Dr. Habershon, Mrs. Fawcett, or one of the other many kind friends who have helped to amuse them.

There is one poor man who always sits at the foot of the platform, who, in addition to being blind, is stone deaf too. A relative sits close by him, and, holding his hand, tells him by touching his fingers,

what is going on.

And there is a young woman who comes there, afflicted in the same way, quite blind and quite deaf. I believe she was a domestic servant; but work is almost impossible now that she has lost both sight and hear-The woman with her is a friend, ing. who lives with her and treats her with all the care and kindness that one so often is wonderful to see how cheerfully they bear their affliction, and especially so when we consider what blindness has meant to them.

One very sad case is that of a clerk, who, some six or seven years ago, was earning a salary of three guineas a week, when he was attacked by a form of spinal paralysis, which has destroyed the optic nerve. The comfortable home was broken up, and his poor wife, in order to support themselves and their five children, goes out to clean offices at five o'clock every morning, and works at her needle the rest of the day. They now receive a weekly pension of ten shillings from the Society.

Here is another case of a man with a wife and seven children, who a few years since worked as a tailor, until he had a severe attack of brain fever, which left him totally blind, and, moreover, subject to epileptic fits. Until Mrs. Starey found them, they were almost starving; but now they are members of the Society, and in receipt of a pension. They earn a little money by caning chairs; but the man can only manage to do the preliminary part of the work, and even between them they can but earn a very little.

There are so many similar cases of the bread winners being struck down by this terrible blindness, that it would take too much time and space to enumerate them. Suffice it to say, that although many are helped by this excellent Society, yet there are numbers waiting to be admitted, and they will have to be excluded unless the funds increase. I have not the report of 1887 by me, but in that of 1886 it is stated that "Pensions have been given in sums varying from one shilling to eight shillings weekly, to the amount of three hundred and twenty-eight pounds nineteen shillings."

All these people to whom I have spoken are loud in their praises of Mrs. Starey and her kindness to them, and they appreciate and value her sympathy and advice as much as the more substantial help which she is able to give them from the Society, and she is always thankful to receive at her house, 53, Hilldrop Road, Camden Road, any contribution in money, clothing, etc., for distribution among these poor blind people, and is always very glad for any one to pay a visit to the Aldenham Street Schools on Thursday evenings at seven o'clock, when, for a short time, their sad, dark lives are made bright and happy by the kindness of others, and when for a few moments they can forget the touching significance of the lines:

Day for the others ever, but for me For ever night! For ever night!

THE TROTH OF ODIN.

By C. GRANT FURLEY.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XIII.

THORA went swiftly away on her journey, feeling far more composed about this flight than she had been when she left Stromness, though she had had Gaspard with her. She was surprised at her own coolness, and congratulated herself on being so free from any emotion which would dull her intellect and make her betray by word or sign that she was in any other plight than the most commonplace of her fellowpassengers. That she could be so calm about leaving him, so steadfast in her determination to go, proved, she told herself, that Gaspard had never been very dear to her. She resolutely kept her thoughts to this one aspect of her case, and did not let herself look at the shipwreck of her life, which had culminated in her going away from the man she had looked upon as her husband for a year.

But passengers between Hartlepool and Newcastle—the first stage of Thora's northward journey-must change carriages on the way, and at this point Thora managed to enter the wrong train and was carried to her destination by a very long and round-About the same time she about route. discovered that she was very cold, though the sun was shining in hotly upon her. Then she began to realise that she cared about what she was losing. "I wonder if this is how people feel when their hearts are breaking?" she asked herself. thought they went mad, and raged, and suffered intensely. But I am only cold-

So cold, that just because of the chill, she began to cry. But such icy troubles as hers freeze up tears, and soon they dried again, and she sat upright in her place without a trace of passion on her countenance, unless, indeed, the close-set lips and eyes, that looked straight before her, and yet saw nothing, were such. Only, she felt very cold—so cold, that it seemed to her that nothing on earth could ever make her warm again.

At last the train reached Newcastle.

Though the journey was long, it was hardly long enough to account for all the fatigue she felt. "I suppose it is because I am tired that I am so cold and stupid. That is the only reason," she said to her-

But she did not ask herself why she was so tired.

She had to wait some hours for the Scotch train that was to take her the next step towards Stromness. She wandered listlessly about the station, or sat upon the benches, hardly conscious of the bustle around her. A man, hanging about like herself, saw the beautiful girl from a distance, and uttered some word of audacious flattery as he lounged past her. She heard the voice, but not the words, and turned upon the speaker a look of such sad questioning that he hurried by, and did not come near her again. She was evidently not the proper material for such a passing flirtation as he wanted. time the evening newspapers came in, and the broadsheets, telling the most sensational news they contained, were placarded about the bookstall. In a little time the newsboys were busy folding them, before they began to go about selling them, and calling out a list of their contents.

"Serious accident at a Hartlepool dock-

yard!" shrilled one.

The name of Hartlepool pierced the cloud that chilled Thora's brain like an electric current, perhaps because it found so many thoughts and memories there, negative in their vagueness, but ready to complete the galvanic chains as soon as the positive impulse came. In an instant after bearing the word Thora was alive to the full.

Hartlepool! Who had mentioned it? That boy who was passing with the basket of books and newspapers hung round his And what had he said about it? As if in answer to her query, the cry came again: "Serious accident in a Hartlepool dockyard!"

Thora rose, and went forward to the

"Tell me about that," abruptly.

"About what?" asked the youth, in some astonishment.

"That in the Hartlepool dockyard."

The boy started. The public did like to get its news cheap, he knew; but this was the first time he had ever been asked to tell for nothing the details of any Gaspard, her husband, who was lying event chronicled in the journals he sold. suffering, in danger of death. And she

Happily his business instinct stuck to him in spite of his bewilderment.

"The accident, miss?" he said, interrogatively; and when Thora said "Yes" in a breathless tone, he added: "Evenin' News, Post, Chronicle—it's in 'em all. Ha'penny only."

"Give me one—any of them—which-ever has most about it," said Thora, giving him the first coin she could find, and

taking a paper.

She opened it drowsily, and walked away, searching for the paragraph she wanted. The newsboy watched her hurried, uneven steps, and meditated.

"She haven't waited for the change." he said, "and she looks as if she'd devour the whole thing. I suppose the news is worth a shilling to her; and, anyway, it won't break her.

So he went on his way.

Thora found the paragraph, and read, as instinctively she had known she would,

that Gaspard was hurt.

"He has sustained a compound fracture of the humerus, with dislocation of the elbow-joint, besides two broken ribs, and internal injuries the extent of which cannot yet be accurately ascertained. removed to the hospital, where he now lies in a critical condition. It is expected that the surgeons will be compelled to amputate the injured arm. At the time of the accident, Harache was talking to a French lady, Mademoiselle Meudon, who is on a visit to his employer, Mr. Mason, and who had taken a kindly interest in her compatriot. In the accident she was thrown on the deck with such violence that it is feared her skull is fractured. By the doctor's wish, she also was conveyed to the hospital, where she now lies in an unconscious condition."

It may be forgiven Thora if, for one moment, she felt a fierce joy at the thought of her enemy being thus struck down. Why was Sophie at the dockyard at that hour? Was it not that she might try to win Gaspard to herself? She had not so much womanly shame in her as to wait till he should learn that his wife - or the woman he had called his wife-had deserted him. Thora felt the hand of Heaven in the blow that struck Sophie Meudon down, and said:

" It is well."

But after the first moment she forgot all about her rival. She could think only of had left him-left him within an hour of the time when he needed her most.

But he was not her husband. She returned to the torturing thought as if now it contained some atonement for her flight. She was not his wife; she had no more right to be with him in his pain than any stranger who had never seen him till that day. So she told herself, with the icy feeling not yet melted from her heart; but the surface, the worldly truth, could not deceive her now. Her heart protested in one great throb, that sent the blood tingling through every vein and brought her back to full, clear-seeing life.

"Not his wife for happiness and prosperity," she said to herself, "but his wife for days of pain and weakness; his wife so long as he needs me to help him."

She could not go to Stromness now; neither for pride or anger would she leave Gaspard. Her place was by her husband her husband's side. In a moment all dread of the world's judgement, all regard for the world's respect, had fallen from her; and she knew what was the work she had to do, careless of what people who knew this or that half of the truth might say of her; sure that Heaven, at least, was on her side.

It was late at night when she got back to Hartlepool; and at the hospital, where she went direct from the station, they at first refused to admit her. But she would not take a refusal. "I am his wife," she said. "I was away when he got hurt, and I must see him."

At last they let her in, and fortunately she had not heard the reason given for the concession in a brief colloquy between the porter and the nurse of the accident ward :

"Let her come. He is very weak, and I wouldn't answer for to-morrow; she had

better see him to-night." The long ward, with the lights turned low, and the night-nurse moving among

the beds whence came an occasional long sigh from a sleepless patient, or the incoherent words of one who spoke in his restless dreams, bewildered Thora; and though she glanced up the room she could not see Gaspard.

"Where is he?" she asked the nurse.

"There," said the nurse, pointing to a screen that surrounded the bed in one corner. "You'll have to wait a little; the doctors are with him now."

As she spoke the house-surgeon and one of the honorary staff came from behind the screen, and not noticing or not heeding the soon as I heard of it. Tell me, is he so

woman who stood by the nurse's side, began a consultation in a low voice.

"I certainly think amputation's the only thing," said the elder doctor; "the fracture and dislocation are too much together, especially considering his condition. can see he is suffering from the shock. We couldn't make a good job of it in any

"He is so anxious to have his arm spared," pleaded the house-surgeon. "It's his working arm, he says, and, for his wife's sake, he wants to keep it."

"I don't know that it will ever be good for much work even if we leave it; and as for his wife, she hardly seems worth risking his life for. She ran away from him this very day, I hear; but I suppose he doesn't know that,"

"Yes, he does; they sent for her, you know, and found the house empty, and a letter from her in French, saying she had gone. They couldn't keep it from him, for he was always asking for 'Thora, my wife,' and when he heard the news he got fearfully excited. His temperature rushed up But it wasn't anger or that. He cried — he's three degrees. anything like that. French, you know, and in a weak condition-and exclaimed, 'Poor Thora; poor child, she has misunderstood me, and now I am laid here like a log and cannot go to see her.' And since then he has begged us more and more to save him, and to spare his arm for her sake."

I suppose they had had a quarrel; but she must have been a goose to bolt on that account. But about his arm ?"

"Don't you think you could leave it till to-morrow ! It—it mayn't make much difference, you know; and, as a matter of fact, I think the despair he would feel at losing the arm would hurt him more than anything."

"If you like," said the senior surgeon, giving in. "You're right; it may not make much difference, and, besides, doing an amputation by this wretched gas-light is rather a troublesome piece of work. We can do it to-morrow, if it seems advisable."

As he turned away Thora went up and touched him on the arm. "What do you mean by its not making much difference ?" she asked.

The surgeon looked at her in a questioning manner, and she went on-" I am Gaspard Harache's wife. I was-away-when the accident happened; but I came back as much hurt that—that— Why is it that sparing his arm won't make much difference?"

The surgeon looked gravely down on the girl's pale, agonised face. "He is badly hurt; the shock has injured him more than the mere fractures. His arm is so much damaged that it will be almost impossible to mend it, therefore it may be necessary to cut it off; but we mean to wait till to-morrow to see if—if it can't be avoided, and if his strength will stand it."

"You mean," she took him up, "that he is so near death that you may leave

him alone?"

He hardly caught the whispered words, and yet it seemed to Thora that she was speaking loudly; she almost thought that Gaspard must hear.

"Not so bad as that, I hope," answered the doctor, but in such dubious tones that she knew she had guessed his meaning

correctly.

"I must see him," she said.

"Will you be quiet—not excite him?"

"Yes, yes; only I must see him again.

There is something he does not understand; I can't let him think wrongly now,

There is something he does not understand; I can't let him think wrongly now, and perhaps, after all, it may not be as you say."

"What do you think?" asked the doctor, turning to the house-surgeon.

"I think it is his best chance; he has evidently been fretting for her, and if anything happened and she had not seen him it would be a never-ending grief to her."

So they led Thora behind the screen.

Gaspard's face was deadly pale, and he lay in that attitude of helpless quiet which a healthy man never assumes. His eyes were closed, and Thora thought at first that he was asleep, but as she came near the bed the white lids were lifted, and he looked up with a troubled, paincontracted gaze. But as he saw her it changed to one—not of gladness so much as thankfulness.

"Thora, my wife!" he exclaimed, in a feeble voice. "You have come back to

me."

"Yes, Gaspard, I have come back to be

your wife as long as you need me."

"As long as I need you! That will be as long as I live—and I must live; I will not let myself die, because you—need me too. Chérie, do you not know that our lives are bound together—that God, who let us come together, will not let us part in this wilful fashion? If we stand outside

the pale of man's approval, you and I, it is the more essential that we do not miss God's as well. We have no one but each other, so we must not desert each other. Be patient with me when I am tired and irritable—I know that you have too often found me so. Forgive me for it, and never think for a moment that it means a wish on my part to have the bond between us loosened or removed."

"I did not understand, Gaspard. I

thought-I thought---

"Ah! pauvre petite, believe that you did not think right—believe that I am loyal to you in my inmost soul."

Tears had come fast to Thora's eyes while he was speaking, and now she fell on her knees by the bed, and sobbed out:

"I believe, Gaspard, and I know that you are better than any one I ever dreamed of; and I will love you, and never doubt you as long as I live.'

The head of the house-surgeon peeped

round the screen:

"I think you should go now, Mrs. Harache; you mustn't excite your husband."

Thora rose meekly and went away, while Gaspard called out, as clearly as his weakness would allow:

"You must save my arm and my life, too. I must live and work for her."

"It will be a difficult business, and you'll suffer a lot," said the house-surgeon; "but it's worth trying, and I'll try."

In another ward Sophie Meudon was lying. She had not yet regained consciousness, and the doctors would not yet predict what the end might be for her; but in their minds the conclusion was fixedlife saved, but reason lost. Eleanor Mason had telegraphed to her friend's father, and in two days he and Madame Reyer were by the girl's bed, trying in vain to get a look of recognition from her blans, restless eyes. Monsieur Meudon was broken down at the sight; but Madame Reyer, though she, too, was shocked and saddened, had not loved her niece so well as to be moved beyond self-control; and when the matron asked if she would like to see the poor young man who had been hurt in the accident, she answered in the affirmative.

So she was led to where Gaspard lay.

"Gaspard Harache!" she exclaimed, as she recognised him. "So he is here! Is this mere accident?"

"Hush!" said a voice near her. not speak loud; it disturbs him." It was Thora who spoke. She was seated by her husband's bed. Madame Reyer turned and looked at her.

"Is this a nurse?" she asked herself.

"She is not dressed like the others; or, is it the girl for whose sake Gaspard sacrificed everything? How beautiful she is, and she looks good also. Gaspard might have thrown away his future for a worse object."

"I am an old friend of Gaspard's," she said, aloud, "and I am surprised to see him here."

"Gaspard, do you know me?" she added, going nearer to him.

"Madame Reyer! It seems strange to see you, and yet it is natural. You have come to see your niece."

"Yes; poor Sophie! But I did not think I should see you also. So she was talking to you when the accident happened. I suppose she had been pleased to see you again. It was a strange chance that brought you to the only place in England where Sophie has a friend."

"A chance! Mais, madame, it was Sophie who obtained for me my situation here. It was no chance."

"Sophie obtained your situation for you!" repeated Madame Reyer, first in bewilderment, then with a conviction that her niece had been following out some subtle plan, an idea which made her nearly hate Sophie, as she thought of Madame Harache, and the scalding tears of hopeless repentance she had shed, not knowing where her son had gone, while Sophie could have told her all. Only the remembrance that Sophie was now harmless for good or evil softened her in some degree.

"Gaspard," she said, "your mother

does not know where you are; she has mourned for you as lost."

"It is my mother's doing that I ever came away," he answered, bitterly.

"True, Gaspard; but she has repented of her action. For months past her most earnest desire has been to welcome you and your wife. She has erred, I know. I do not justify her. But if she atones, will you not forgive?"

Gaspard's heart was still hot against his mother, and the closer union that had now come to him and Thora made him more hard towards any who had helped to wrong her. Yet he could hardly refuse forgiveness to his mother.

"Let Thora decide," he said, at last. And Thora, being a woman, could see

And Thora, being a woman, could see the case from the point of view of the mother's wounded pride, and said:

"Gaspard, forgive."
So Madame Harache, a grey-haired woman, aged almost beyond her son's recognition, came to Hartlepool, and meekly—nay, thankfully—received Thora

as her daughter.

There is an old church at Hartlepool, whose grey walls have withstood the storms and the subtle, gnawing mists of six centuries. Worn by storm and time, it still holds within a shrine that speaks of faith in things unseen, of loyalty to a God who is not the God of this world. There, when many weeks had past—when the arm Gaspard had feared to lose was sound and strong again, and when Monsieur Meudon had carried away his daughter to one of those retreats we keep for those bodies who have outlived their soulsthere Gaspard Harache and Thora Sweynson knelt; and the blessing of the White Christ confirmed the Troth of Odin.

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New Series of "All the Year Round."

So many Volumes are now comprised in the current Series of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, that I have deemed it expedient, for the convenience of its readers, to commence with January, 1889, a New Series of the Journal.

It will be my earnest endeavour to ensure for the New Series the favour with which its predecessors have been received, and for which I take this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks; and I trust that I may be enabled to maintain, in the future, the high standard of literary merit for which ALL THE YEAR ROUND has been always distinguished in the past.

CHARLES DICKENS.

SUMMER NUMBER

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"WITH GOLDEN OARS ON A SILVER STREAM."

By C. L. PIRKIS.

"'ALL in the blue unclouded weather,'" I quoted. "Now this must have been the identical landscape Tennyson had in his mind's eye when he wrote the 'Lady of Shalott.'

On either side the river lie Long fields of barley and of rye.

There they are. 'And through the fields the road runs by.' There it runs! We haven't the island though. But there are the 'Four gray walls and four gray towers,' 'which overlook a space of flowers.' What monumental satires our houses are sometimes on their insignificant inhabitants! Fancy that picturesque and historic edifice sheltering such matter-of-fact, unimportant individuals as our four selves."

Those four selves were Aunt Mattie, and her two nieces, Olivia and Geneviève. Number four was myself, Edward Goldsworthy, their cousin, and the affianced lover of Geneviève, whose poetic name on my lips was reduced to sweet, loveable "Jenny."

The picturesque, historic edifice was The Towers, a big, rambling, country house, on the banks of the River Ullin, which Aunt Mattie had hired for a summer's holiday.

Jenny and I were supposed to be fishing on this golden summer's morning. At any rate, we had brought out with us two was speedily set at rest.

fishing-rods, and a big basket. I think, however, the household would have been on famine rations if it had depended on us for supplies.

Olivia was supposed to be sketching and playing the part of Gooseberry at the same time. How her sketch prospered, I don't know; but her part of Gooseberry, at any rate, was played to perfection. She had not only set up her easel quite out of ear-shot of us two, but had likewise taken care that a thick clump of alders should intervene, so that nothing but the occasional gleam of a scarlet skirt between the bushes proclaimed her proximity.

Olivia was nearly ten years older than Geneviève. She was a dark, handsome girl, of so markedly Spanish a type that her pretty old English name became transformed by general consent into Olive. Before Jenny had come home from her Dresden boarding-school, there had been sundry love passages between Olive and me. Jenny, however, had flashed in upon us all a brown-eyed, brown-haired, fascinating little creature, with really brilliant talents, and a whole armoury of coquettish arts at command. The love passages with Olive seemed to die a natural death, and before Jenny had been "out" three weeks, she and I were engaged to be married.

My conscience, at first, had been a little troubled on Olive's behalf, and I had made sundry halting attempts at abject confession and apology. But she took it all so serenely and laughingly that my mind

Aunt Mattie did not take the news of our engagement half so serenely. "It's ill-advised-hasty!" she said, in her usual "She's years too acrimonious fashion. young for you, Edward; and what, may I ask, do you know of each other's tempers and dispositions? She has been in Dresden for the past three years, and you have been so engrossed by your profession for the past ten that you have never given a thought to anything outside it. Well, the best thing you two can do will be to see as much of each other as possible, and get tired of each other as fast as you can-so come and spend three unbroken weeks with us at The Towers, as soon as you like."

Aunt Mattie's invitation, though ungraciously given, I was glad enough to accept. I had been very hard at work in Dublin, conducting prosecutions for the Crown against sundry Moonlighters whose raids had involved murder; and, in addition to the pleasure of the golden hours I should spend in Jenny's society, I was thankful to get a three weeks' entire rest in country

air. I must say that Aunt Mattie was very trying at times. The girls, however,

were used to her, and bore her fits of ill-temper calmly enough.

Jenny used to take her revenge by seizing every opportunity for "taking off" Aunt Mattie. Jenny was a splendid mimic, and it was enough to make one die with laughter to see her part her curly hair into two straight "window curtains" over her ears, draw down her nostrils, purse her lips, and speak in short, sharp sentences, every one of which ended with a little contemptuous: "H-m-m."

If it had not been for Olive she must have been found out over and over again. Olive had quick ears, which she placed at our service. If Jenny and I were talking and laughing together, and Olive dashed in suddenly, talking very fast, and looking rather red in the face, we knew that Aunt Mattie was at hand, and used to relapse into seriousness accordingly.

I believe Olive placed herself and her easel just behind that group of alders as much because it commanded a view of the path which led straight from the house to the river bank, as because it afforded a leafy screen for the "sweet eyes and low replies" of Jenny and Ned.

I was not one whit surprised when I saw her bright red skirt and flapping straw hat suddenly flash out from behind the alders, and heard her voice at rather a high pitch coming nearer and nearer.

[Conducted by

"I brought a book of Irish legend out with me as well as my easel this morning." she was saying as she came along, "and have been lucky enough to come upon the legend of the River Ullin. Shall I read it to you? Oh! Jenny, do put your hair over your forehead; it looks so ugly parted in that fashion."

That was what her lips said; her face

said :

"Aunt Mattie is at hand! Prepare!" Jenny and I simultaneously picked up our rods, and began to fish very hard.

"Let's have the legend by all means," I "Of course, it includes a water spirit, a pair of lovers, a moon, and a mid-

summer eve."

"Yes; they're all there," said Olive, beginning to read very fast as the sound of crisp, crunching footsteps came nearer. "It happened on a midsummer's eve, and the moon was at its full. This River Ullin, in the old days, was the boundary between the lands of the Fitz-Geralds and of the Fitz-Neils. There were two Fitz-Geralds, brothers, the elder was affianced to a daughter of the Fitz-Neils. One midsummer eve it so chanced that the girl went out rowing on the river with the two brothers, an ancient retainer of the house taking the oars. They were a long time out on the river, and the old servant fell forward in the boat fast asleep; and his cars slipping out of his hand, were carried away by the current down stream. But the boat went on smoothly as before, and, looking up, they saw, to their intense surprise, a dark, shadowy form, seated in the stern of the boat, with an oar in either hand. As I told you, the moon was at its full, and as the moonlight fell between them and the dark form, they could not distinctly see its face, could only make out that it was stern and troubled. The stream showed like a silver flood in the moonlight, and in and out of it the oars which the dark form held flashed as if made of pure

"The three sat silent and awe-stricken, holding in their breath, and not daring to move. A great stillness fell upon them. In it the splash of the oars in the water, the whirling of the mill-wheel, the soughing of the breeze among the reeds seemed to die, and in their stead new and strange

sounds came to life.

"Orperhaps it was that a new and strange power of hearing was granted to them, and

they began now, for the first time, to hear sounds which nevertheless were old as time itself-the soft, slow trailing of the clouds below the moon in the summer sky; the stealthy fall of the dew on the grassy banks; the kiss with which the moonlight met the waters.

"They could hear, too, as they sat side by side, the beating of each other's pulses, the mounting of the blood in their veins, the very working of each other's thoughts in their brains. Not silently as of yore were those thoughts flowing along, but with busy hum and rush as of a noisy

tumultuous tide.

"'I would I could slay you,' said the thoughts of the younger brother to the elder, 'for you have stolen my love away.' 'I hate you and I hate those who are making me marry you,' said the girl's thoughts to the man to whom a moment ago she had been speaking soft, loving And 'I love your gold and your land,' said the thoughts of the elder brother to the girl whom he had just been swearing he loved for herself alone."

Here Aunt Mattie's high heels crunched the last pebble in the footpath, and began making their way through the tangle to

our shady nook.

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"Which thing is an allegory," I said, making a show of carrying on unconcerned conversation. "Love with his golden bow, and truth with his golden sceptre we all know; but who is he of the golden oars? Is he the child born of the two, the compound Love-truth of German fable ?"

Olive looked up from her book. "The story breaks off abruptly here," she said, "ending without an end, as it were, just with a caution to betrothed lovers not to venture on the Ullin at a full-moon on a midsummer eve, lest unpleasant revelations might follow."

"Some could dare them," I cried, confident in my own honesty of heart, and in Jenny's. I flashed a glance at my love, but her eyes were fixed so intently on the river, that they did not meet mine.

At that moment Aunt Mattie's shadow fell upon us and our empty basket.

Aunt Mattie was very tall, very thin, with high cheek-bones and aquiline nose, and always wore lemon - coloured print gowns in the morning.

It seemed as if her elongated shadow had preceded her down the path, had peeped into our basket on its own account, and had conveyed back to her the tidings

her eyes had had time to assure herself of the fact, was :

"No mullet of course! I suppose the fish so soon as they hear your footsteps execute a series of manœuvres and swim out to sea! H-m."

Aunt Mattie's H-m is impossible to describe upon paper; it was partly nasal, partly guttural, but very expressive.

Then her glance fell upon Jenny's forehead, "window-curtained" with infinite pains after the exact pattern of her own.

"You'll get sun-stroke, Jenny, if you don't take care," said Olive, picking up Jenny's hat and putting it on her sister's head, so as to cover the offending locks. "Is the

post in, auntie?"

"From whom do you expect letters?" asked auntie. Then she drew two letters from the pocket of her lemon-coloured skirt. "Neither of them are for you. But I've something to say to you about one of them. First, let me tell you that Uncle Ralph will be here to-day," she broke off, looking round from one to the other, as if she expected a demonstration to follow. didn't however. Uncle Ralph was Aunt Mattie's only brother. As she was in the habit of saying that as girl and boy they were so much alike they would have passed muster as twins, our want of enthusiasm on the matter will be understood. Our only chance we felt lay in the fact that Uncle Ralph had been living in Australia for the past twenty-five years of his life, and that it was possible that the family likeness might in some sort have faded.

Finding that we didn't jump up and clap our hands, Aunt Mattie went on to

her second item of news.

"This is from Harold—a most extraordinary letter. What it all means I haven't the faintest notion. He tells me that, after thinking carefully over the matter, he has made up his mind to give up his profession, to go to Canada, and take to farming !!!"

Not three, no, nor yet three dozen marks of exclamation would express the tone of voice in which Aunt Mattie uttered her

last words.

Her dark eyes pierced us one after another all round in quick succession, with a look in them that seemed to say, " Now, which of you three is at the bottom of this, I wonder?"

Harold was another cousin - we had "Cousins by dozens" in our family. fine young fellow of six-and-twenty, who of its emptiness; for her greeting, before | had gone through his law examinations brilliantly, and had acted as junior to me in our Crown prosecutions. He was a trifle conceited, I must admit, and I frequently had to "take him down a peg or two."

"This is the first I have heard of it!" I cried in reply to Aunt Mattie's bayonet-like glance at me. "He must be talked out of such folly."

"The first you have heard of it!" she repeated, "and he was with you not three

weeks ago in Dublin!"

Here Jenny, a little to my surprise, dropped her fishing-rod, and, without so much as a look at me, crept away in silence towards the house.

Olive came to the front gallantly:

"Well, auntie, and he was here not ten days ago with us, and said never a word of his intentions," she said deprecatingly.

Here, I am bound to admit, I did a very cowardly thing: followed Jenny's example and crept away after her to the house. The truth was, I never felt quite sure of my temper in Aunt Mattie's presence. If she had been my uncle, instead of my aunt, I should have been "cut off with a shilling" long before I was twenty.

I suppose Olive must have had rather a bad time of it, for, half an hour afterwards, Jenny and I, knocking about the balls in the billiard-room, heard Aunt Mattie say,

as she went along the hall:

"I'll talk to you again on the matter. I haven't said one half that I have to say," and her voice, as she said this, actually

sounded weak and tired.

But weak though it was, it did a good deal of work the rest of that day. Ralph was expected to arrive late in the afternoon, and Aunt Mattie was very intent upon seeing that everything was in apple-pie order to receive him. nothing be done by other people's hands that you can do with your own," was the motto on which she appeared to conduct her household arrangements; so, naturally, her hands were always rather full. Here, there, everywhere, we could hear her. The house was full of old-fashioned winding passages and corridors. Down every one of them Aunt Mattie's voice seemed to be travelling.

And as for her shadow! Well, that seemed to be multiplied by at least ten, and seemed perpetually in front of her all day long, peeping into cupboards, chests of drawers, store-rooms—in fact, into every quiet corner the house possessed. Directly Jenny and I settled into a comfortable nook, with a book between us, that long,

thin shadow seemed to find us out and bring us to light, as it were.

"Ah, there you are!" it seemed to say.
"Idle, as usual, and there are mountains of
work to be done."

"Fancy if Uncle Ralph 'would pass muster as her twin,'" sighed Jenny. "How thankful we shall all be to have the Ullin so near at hand, for life will be

an impossibility!"

But Uncle Ralph, when late in the afternoon the post-horses deposited him at the door, in no wise justified Aunt Mattie's assertion, so far, at least, as his personal appearance was concerned; for whereas she might have sat at any moment for a symbolic figure of "the industries and manufactures of the United Kingdom," he had that quiet dignity of face and figure, that dreamy air of repose, without solidity, which an artist would have seized upon gratefully to embody a conception of Contemplation.

His voice, too, had not even the echo of Aupt Mattie's in it. It was, if I may so call it, a blind voice, that is to say a voice one rarely hears, except from a blind person, or from one deprived of the use of

one of his senses.

We three young people did not go near him till half-an-hour after his arrival. We naturally thought that the brother and sister alone could more easily bridge over the gulf of twenty-five years of separation with reminiscences of long ago.

When, however, we heard him speaking in the garden, we went down to greet him, and were severally introduced to him, not "vivâ voce," but by means of a little ivory tablet which hung on his watch-chain.

"For I'm stone deaf, so far as your words are concerned," he explained. "Although just as a man partially blind can see form, not colour, so can I hear your voice, though I have not the remotest notion what you are talking about. When any one sings, even, I don't hear a note, only sound reaches me."

Jenny and I exchanged glances. He would play the part of Gooseberry even

better than Olive.

"But," he went on a little dreamily, after a moment's pause, "I don't suppose my loss is very great after all. Words may reveal, or words may conceal. Often the tongue says one thing and the voice another." He broke off, suddenly exclaiming: "Ah, what is that?"

It was nothing very much. Not enough one would think to make a deaf man stand still expectant in the middle of the path, with a look on his face of positive physical pain. It was only one of those low, long minor notes a caged blackbird gives before bursting into song, and it came from one Jenny had captured, which was now hanging in a wicker-cage in the verandah that skirted the house.

Charles Dickens.]

I shouted into his ears whence the sound had come.

"I shall be very much obliged to you if one of you will set that bird free," he said. "Poor thing! he's thinking of the days when he had his liberty, and his life was worth living."

Then he turned to me specially, saying: "There's a wonderful kinship in cries of pain all through creation. I thought it was your Aunt Mattie's voice calling to us; it was a voice full of memories."

Once more Jenny and I exchanged Aunt Mattie's voice, like the note of a bird, sighing for "the days that were no more." Had he ever heard her

"H-m-m," we wondered.

But before that day was over we were to have Aunt Mattie put before us in In spite of the another point of view. pleasurable excitement caused by re-union with her brother after twenty-five years' separation, she could not get over her annoyance at Harold's threatened folly. At dinner we had the whole thing rehearsed once more, and Harold was vigorously denounced for his "base ingratitude to those who had spent so much care and thought upon his education." Ingratitude was stamped upon his every feature, in spite of his good looks. Fickle he was, too-"unstable as water," that also, if I remember rightly, was "stamped upon his every feature." Only one thing remained now for his friends and relatives to do, "wash their hands of him." Here we thankfully noted that Aunt Mattie dipped her fingers into the fingerbowl, and concluded that she had finished her dessert. "Yes, wash their hands of him! Leave their money to infirmaries, dispensaries, workhouses; lay it down in the streets for the paupers to pick up! Better that a thousand times than spend it on ungrateful nephews and nieces "-here a look right and left at Olive and Jenny-"who took favours as a matter of course, and rendered back for them neither duty nor affection." All this with never a comma between, let alone a full

Uncle Ralph's quiet eyes followed her as I

she left the room with the girls; then he turned to me.

"Poor thing!" he said. "Poor thing! He was a fine, handsome young fellow. They told her too suddenly. But it would have been awful for her to have seen him brought into the house dead without a

word of warning."

Then I knew that his thoughts had flown to a certain Captain Austen, to whom Aunt Mattie at some remote period of her history had been engaged to be married, and who had been killed on the spot by a fall from his horse. Uncle Ralph's deafness was assuredly of a most illusive kind; he had thought that Aunt Mattie was cataloguing her dead lover's virtues instead of her living nephew's vices!

Uncle Ralph did not go into the drawing-room that night. He was tired with his journey, and went to bed early. found the girls whispering in a corner over

the old gentleman's eccentricities.

"Call him deaf!" cried Jenny, hears too much, not too little. I shall keep out of his way as much as possible, and won't open my lips when he's in the room, or he'll be putting words into my mouth

which I've never spoken."

We both laughed at the idea of Jenny keeping such a resolution as that; laughed till Jenny, quite in a pet, fluttered out of the room. As she shut the door behind her, Olive opened the piano, and began singing, "A frog he would a-wooing go," at the very top of her voice. For some reason or other, Olive always rushed into song when left alone with me. seemed to shun a tête à tête talk with me in the most incomprehensible manner.

High and higher went her voice till I began to think it would be lost in the clouds like a sky-lark's. She fairly sang me out of the room, and the last thing I head that night as I laid my head upon my pillow, was: "Whether his mother

would let him or no."

But Uncle Ralph was apparently entertained with melody of another sort during the night, for he said, as he seated himself at the breakfast-table the next morning:

"Who was that singing so late last night? What was the song, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest'?" He looked enquiringly at each of us in turn, adding, "It was very sweet, very mournful. After I had ceased I couldn't get to sleep for thinking of it."

We all looked at each other.

"The house is haunted. Oh!" said

"It's those dreadful echoes along the passages," said Aunt Mattie, looking as if she only wished that she could catch them.

Olive laughed merrily. "I'm not the guilty person, at any rate," she whispered to me. "Not with any amount of twisting could he get Mendelssohn out of my ditty."

At the sound of her laugh, Uncle Ralph turned and looked at her, that was all.

Uncle Ralph's personality made itself felt in all sorts of odd ways before that week was over. He seemed to have brought an atmosphere into the house with him which appeared to be acting upon us one and all in a variety of ways. It had a wonderfully tranquillising effect on Aunt Mattie: even the bridge of her nose seemed to sink under it; her voice assuredly became younger and less rasping by many degrees, and her shadow, instead of seeming to elongate itself on the slightest provocation, absolutely appeared to be acquiring a full and rounded outline.

"Here it comes; but it is not what it was," said Jenny to me as we stood together under the cherry-trees in the orchard and watched Aunt Mattie's shadow preceding her down the path.

And she actually passed us with a nod and a smile, and did not wonder as she did sometimes, "Whether we could summon sufficient energy to gather a basketful for dessert."

Jenny was true to her resolution to keep out of Uncle Ralph's way as much as possible. Except at meal times I do not think he ever caught sight of her. She got as much fun out of him as she could; and before he had slept three nights in the house she could pitch the exact note of his "blind voice," and accompany it with that prolonged solemn shake of the head which Uncle Ralph, at times, made to do duty for a dozen sentences. Sometimes she would thus shake her head for a good minute and a half, and then, in a deep tragedy voice which would have suited King Lear with the dead body of his Cordelia in his arms, would say: "Pass me the salt," or some such common-place phrase.

Then she took to singing Olive's wild ditties with, as nearly as possible, Olive's inflection of voice, when she knew that Uncle Ralph was in an adjoining room.

"Now, I wonder if he'll say this is Olive sighing for the wings of a dove," she said to me in the pauses of her melody.

One evening when she was thus singing, I, coming in suddenly out of the garden, saw Uncle Ralph standing in a listening attitude immediately outside the drawing-room door.

"It's an unworthy song for so beautiful a voice," I said to him, fishing for a compliment to Jenny's soprano, curious, too, to know if he were deceived as to the identity of the singer.

He shook his head at the word beautiful.

"It's a poor, dry, little voice," he answered, "with no more soul in it than that of a grasshopper."

I felt inclined—well—to tell him what I thought of him on the spot; but restrained myself, merely saying, a trifle scornfully:

"After that, no doubt, you'll tell me I have the voice of a nightingale!"

He turned round and faced me.

"Ned," he said, "shall I tell you what I should say of your voice if I stood here and heard you speaking in that room? I should say: 'That's a man walking and talking in his sleep, and he will be in danger soon unless some one looks after him.'"

I stared at him in blank amazement. He laid his hand upon my shoulder.

"Ned," he said, "on my way here from Queenstown I thought to myself: 'Three young people in the house, and my dear sister Mattie! Why this will be the merriest household I have ever lived in.' And lo, now I am here, I think it is the saddest I have ever made one of!"

Then, without waiting for my reply, he

turned and left me.

I felt my head going round. Ours a sad household! With Olive singing from morning till night, and Jenny playing pan-

tomime in every corner! I felt utterly puzzled and bewildered. Were there, in truth, things going on around me which my eyes were too dim to see, my ears too dull to hear? Was I to be compared to a man walking and talking in his sleep; I, who had just been conducting an intricate prosecution, and had brought home charges of murder and conspiracy to a most wary criminal, and one backed up by a powerful political league! Why, I had been specially complimented by the judge before whom the case had been tried, and had been honourably mentioned in the House of Commons for my astuteness and sound legal knowledge. My vanity refused to accept the judgement Uncle Ralph had passed upon me.

I could believe that Aunt Mattie's rasp-

ing voice had the echo of sweet, sad memories in it, that Olive's gaiety was at times a little forced, and might now and then have a note of weariness in it; but that my Jenny, the incarnation of everything that was sweet, and loveable in girlhood, should own to no more soul than a grasshopper, and that I, the energetic, acute young lawyer, should be nothing better than a man walking and talking in his sleep, were fancies at which to laugh.

I wandered out into the garden among the sycamores, thinking that I would light a cigarette and smoke off my discontent, before I rejoined the family circle. It was a still, hot night; the moonlight filtered softly, shyly, through the broad leaves, turning the common-place gravel walk into a tesselated footway, fit for the feet of an Emperor. Not a breeze stirred, the air was heavy with the scent of flowers. Up and down I walked for about a quarter of an hour, then I turned into a side alley leading down to the garden gate. Two figures advanced to meet me, from out the shadows—Olive and Uncle Ralph.

I thought I had never seen Olive look so handsome before, as she stood still in the half-light, made by the summer sky and full-moon. She had on a long trailing gown of old gold colour, a black lace mantilla over her head and shoulders, which she had fastened on one side with some yellow roses. In her hand she held

a large Spanish fan.

"Uncle Ralph has been telling me of his long illness and the troubles which came upon him all at once, and how he lost his hearing," she said as I came up to them.

"It's an enigma—it wants thinking over to understand," said Uncle Ralph, evidently continuing the conversation from where it

had broken off.

I merely said "Indeed!" for I was in no mood to discuss Uncle Ralph and his troubles.

Olive, guessing that possibly some slight difference had arisen between us, turned the conversation at once. "Is any one going down to meet Harold to-night?" she asked.

"To meet Harold!" I repeated.

"I thought you knew. I suppose he is coming to talk over his Canadian craze. Jenny told me that he would be here by the late train—I fancied you had told her," the answered.

Jenny told her! How was it that Jenny was so well-informed of Harold's movements? Had they been corresponding?

At that moment Jenny, all blue draperies with some light summer wrap thrown over them, came fluttering out through the drawing-room window.

I turned upon her at once. "Has Harold been writing to you?" I asked.

"Why did you not tell me?"

Jenny tossed her head and made her eyes very round.

"Am I supposed to show you every letter I receive?" she queried, not in her usual playful, coquettish fashion, but in earnest.

We were on the verge of quarrelling.

Olive tried to effect a diversion.

"Oh, for a row on the river!" she exclaimed. "It's too hot to go in-doors till midnight. Uncle Ralph!" Here she tip-toed and spoke right into his ear. "If you'll come with us it will be all right, and Aunt Mattie won't say a word."

Jenny broke into enthusiastic entreaties. "It would be heavenly, the very thing above everything else she would enjoy," she said, clasping her hands over my arm and looking up bewitchingly into my face.

A man might be ever so furious with Jenny, and be on the point of anathematising and discarding her for a heartless coquette; but just let her clasp her hands over his arm and look up into his face as she did into mine, and he would be bound to forgive her on the spot, and would wear his life out to fulfil her every whim.

We turned our backs on the house and sauntered slowly down towards the Ullin. Between us and the river stretched a tree-less expanse of gray meadow. Athwart it lay a white mist in heavy folds, and so impregnated with moonlight that we might almost have fancied it was the moon-

beams themselves consolidated. Olive's tall, stately figure looked almost spectral as she walked ahead of us through the vapour, parting it right and left. Uncle Ralph brought up the rear, Jenny and I walking side by side. Jenny was once more all fascination and smiles; but I was very silent, puzzling over her conduct and wondering how I could get to the bottom of it all without making myself appear in the light of a jealous fool. Uncle Ralph was very silent also, and before we got down to the river Jenny grew subdued, and dropped her light chatter. The weird cry of a distant corn-crake was the only voice heard as we seated ourselves in the boat, and I pushed away from the bank.

The boat was a big tub of a thing. I took the oars; Uncle Ralph seated himself

immediately behind me, saying he would like to pull on our way back. Jenny volunteered to steer—she always liked to be doing something—and Olive sat in front of her silent, as I was, and I thought looking a little pale and weary in the white moonlight.

Even Jenny noticed her forlorn looks. "Why, Olive," she cried. "You look eerie enough to make the midsummer fairies think you belong to them, and carry you off bodily. Do sing, or do something, you'll make us all miserable."

Olive flung her black-lace wrap half over her face so that little more than her large dark eyes could be seen, and then began a song that kept time with the

stroke of my oars.

[June 14, 1888.]

A dreamy, delicious row it was, in spite of the under-current of discontent of which every one of us must have been conscious. The Ullin showed literally a silver stream, dashed with inky shadows. Our boat and four selves must have stood out in black outline against its darkly-lustrous sheen. Now and again an otter or water-rat dived in from among the reeds. Splash, splash, went my oars, keeping time with the song that Olive, in soft low tones, was trilling:

"Floating lilies gleam
Through purple shadows,
Dim as in a dream,
Droop languid willows."

These were the last words of her song that I heard, for at that moment other sounds caught my ear: the stealthy tread of footsteps among the alders on our near bank, and the lew whispers of subdued voices.

"Setting night-lines," was my first thought; a thought, however, quickly put to flight by the muttered words which, with straining ears, I could make out:

"That's him, the murtherin' villain, that sent Tim Conolly to his death!"

After that, Olive's song, her face even, the moonlight, the river—everything but those men's voices was a blank to me.

Tim Conolly was the Moonlighter and murderer who had met his deserts through me. These men, without a doubt, were members of his league bent on avenging his death. A sudden sharp click, which I heard among the shadows, gave confirmation to the surmise.

"Steady, Pat," were the next words I heard. "It's a moving target ye're afther

aiming at."

Then there came a second sharp click as from another rifle.

To double speed, and so out-distance their bullets, was my first impulse. It would give me a chance for my life, if nothing more. A second thought followed: that which gave me a chance of life brought risk to those with me. A boat darting swiftly in and out among the shadows and bewildering moonlight was an uncertain mark for a good marksman. These men might not be-most likely were not — first-rate shots; but, nevertheless, depend upon it, they would not take their rifles home with the bullets in them. A bullet meant for me might hit one of the girls who faced me, or Uncle Ralph who sat so close behind. Better than that a thousand times give them a straight aim and be done with it.

All this flashed through my mind in one moment. I acted on the impulse of that moment. I placed the oars in Uncle Ralph's hands and stood upright in the boat.

"Hallo, there, you men in the bushes!" I cried, "did I hear my name? I am Edward Goldsworthy. Do any of you wish to speak to me?"

There came a swift answer to this—a bullet which struck me slantwise on the shoulder, a second which hit me somewhere in the ribs.

But was it to Uncle Ralph that I had handed my oars, or had another than he, with golden oars, slipped into my place? For, as I fell forward headlong in the boat, I heard Jenny's voice, crying despairingly: "Oh, Harold, Harold! Will they kill him, too?" And Olive's passionate broken-hearted wail as she flung her arms around me: "Oh, my love! my love! would to Heaven I could have died in your stead!"

It all happened two years ago, and I can tell the story easily enough now. It was Olive and Aunt Mattie who nursed me through a long six weeks of fever and pain. Jenny did not dare to come near me after Aunt Mattie and Uncle Ralph had witnessed her agitated welcome to Harold, who arrived safe and sound that night at The Towers. Not that she had any great cause to dread my reproaches, for I had little enough right to make them long before those six weeks came to an end.

Things, however, arranged themselves naturally and easily without much confession or explanation from any one. Olive's and my wedding-day was fixed before our stay at The Towers ended; and Harold and Jenny were told-well, that they had better wait a year or so, in case Jenny might alter her mind a second

"Do you hear anything of the sleepwalker in my voice now ?" I asked Uncle Ralph the other day, when he came in to give us an account of Jenny's wedding, at which he had acted in "loco parentis" to the bride.

He did not hear me, for Olive had seated herself at the piano, and, a little mischievously, had begun to sing,

"A frog he would a-wooing go."

But evidently not with her old inflection of tone, for, as the last note died away, he said to me in his solemn, blind voice:

"What is that she was singing-

WAS HE A COWARD?

By E. C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

ONE evening, in the late summer of 1855, the setting sun was sending streams of golden light across the low, broad meadows and groups of trees beyond the river, and the river itself, between its deep banks and walls, might have been rolling over golden sands, and a vivid glory fell on the old red houses of the city, climbing up from the water's edge, and on the great Cathedral, with its glowing windows, standing high above all.

Near the Cathedral stood the Deanery, a large old house of red sandstone, shadowed by chestnut trees, with a walled garden descending to the river. setting sun was pouring its light straight in at one great Gothic window, as if it had nothing else to do; so that every corner of the Dean's library, with its heavy furniture and rows of handsome books, was almost dazzlingly bright.

One side of the window was open, where a magnolia and a red rose were struggling together to reach the old stone sill. There, in the full glow of evening, the Dean's wife was sitting, clear against the comparative shadow behind her, looking, as many people said, much too young for her position; her brown head leant back against the mullion, as her sweet, wistful eyes watched her husband as he walked about the room.

of the broad towing-path, below the ivy wall that bounded the Deanery garden, could see her sitting there; but the passers-by were not many.

Only one man, sauntering along with eyes rather sullenly fixed on the water, looked up and gazed when he found himself below the Deanery; half stopped even, and, after lingering a few minutes with a sort of hesitation in his manner, presently strolled on a little further, and began slowly to climb some steps which led up into the Close, and so round to the Deanery. As he walked he muttered to himself a good deal; and one or two people turned to look at him, for he was a handsome, soldierly-looking young man, though with a curious hang-dog manner.

In the library at the Deanery there was great trouble, in spite of the sweet looks of

Dean Brett was a man both admired and envied by his neighbours. He was a popular, eloquent man, and fortunate in everything.

In his youth he had been much thrown among great ladies, and perhaps some influence of this kind may have accounted for his being made a Dean at forty-five. But, in spite of these things, every one knows that he was a most excellent Dean.

At this time the appointment had only been made about a year, and he seemed to have everything that could make life happy. Ten years before he had married a girl as good as she was pretty, who now, at thirty, looked about twenty-five; and he had one son, the pride of his heart, a bold, handsome, unmanageable boy, who obeyed no one but his mother.

The Dean himself was an easy-going, happy-natured man, full of fun and kindness. But his wife had lately discovered, to her surprise, that under all his pleasant ways there was a great pride, a great sensitiveness, and a stern unforgivingness which fairly astonished her.

It was, certainly, a terrible business; and, at first, he had taken it in utter silence, only going about with a weight of sadness upon him, and not even talking it over with his wife. Well, the thing had been hushed up, and she understood that it was better not to speak of it, much as she longed to do so. It was, perhaps, the first great trouble of his life, and she felt that she ought to share it with him; yet he knew best.

He had one brother, much younger than People looking up from the outer edge himself. She had known him before her marriage, but had hardly seen him since, for he was in the army, and had been away with his regiment in various parts of the world. He had the character of a daring officer, rather reckless and foolhardy. As a young fellow he had been wild, and had cost his elder brother a good deal of trouble and money. But that had not altered his brother's deep and strong affection for him, his pride in Martin's dashing courage, his delight in his letters. The little boy was called after him, and was brought up to think his uncle Martin a hero. The Dean was always saying:

"It is extraordinary how that boy reminds me of Martin. He was exactly that sort of child; only more manageable, I must say, for he had a much better

temper."

And now Martin had got into some terrible scrape in the Crimea. There had been a court-martial; he had been cashiered

for cowardice and neglect of duty. The disgraceful thing had been kept out of the papers, and was not generally Friends at head-quarters had stepped in to shield the unfortunate man as best they could. But he was ruined. And the second post to-day had brought a letter from him-a somewhat free-and-easy letter, even his kind sister-in-law had to confess-saying that he was in England, and asking if he might come to the Deanery. It was the first letter he had written to his brother, since the crash came, and he did not even attempt to make any excuse for himself. The Dean had just answered it that sunny evening in the library; and his answer was very harsh and stern. He absolutely declined to see his brother, or to hold any communication with him in future.

"Oh, Henry; but this is too hard!" said Mrs. Brett; and then she laid the letter sadly down, and sat there in the

window watching him.

"Come here!" repeated the Dean in his indignation. "Does he think we can live here, then, with his shame and disgrace hanging over us? And the boy—ruin to him. Such an example—a coward—a man with a stain on his name! Anything but that! I declare to you that that letter of his makes me think I had better resign, and hide my head in some remote corner of the country. But even then, the shame would be the same. How a man could endure it, and not shoot himself!"

"Dear Henry, what are you saying?"
"I don't know," said the Dean, with a

sudden return to his usual gentleness. "Something contrary to what I should preach, no doubt. It is not good for us to talk about this. Were you going out? Don't let me keep you. No, the letter is not too hard. It will settle the business, and we shall hear no more of his coming here, I hope."

"Poor Martin! I am so dreadfully sorry for him," said Mrs. Brett, coming down

from her place in the window.

"My dear," he said, "be a sensible woman, and think of the boy. I wish we had not given him that name. If the fellow had any true feeling of what he has done, he would go away to Australia, or somewhere, and never show his face again."

His wife came to him, and he took her in his arms and kissed her, and smoothed

back her soft hair.

"It is very odd," he said, "that women can't feel like men about these things. Now go, and we won't mention the subject again. Drive it out of your thoughts, or you will make me more unhappy still."

She left him, and went out alone into the golden-shadowed city. She walked round the Cathedral to that part of the Close where the great elms and the rooks' nests are, and where flights of rugged steps lead down to the river. It was always very quiet there; there had often seemed to her a touch of heaven's own peace in that nook, away from the world and the town, where the great Cathedral looked down upon meadows and flowing water. There was one corner of half-ruined wall, an old rampart below the Cathedral, where she and her little Martin often sat together and told stories—always soldiers' stories; he cared for no other kind of life.

She was going there now, in a sort of sad puzzle, for the Dean's idea that his brother's disgrace would be the ruin of his boy, was so terrible that it had to be faced quite alone. As she approached it, a tall man's figure started up from that very corner and came to meet her. She looked at him, with his slouching air of misery and shame, and, at first, did not know him, or could not realise who it was. At her wedding, ten years before, her husband's brother had been the handsomest, most ornamental, and most charming of young men, with a careless self-confidence which no one could find fault with: he seemed to have such a perfect right to it. Even now, as she gazed at him wonderingly, stopping half mechanically as he stopped,

something of the old look came suddenly back into his face.

"I suppose you have forgotten me, Daisy," he said.

Mrs. Brett flushed crimson. It had been her old pet name as a girl; but it was nearly forgotten now. Even the Dean-a little formal in his ways-used it most rarely. He said Margaret was far more beautiful, which, no doubt, was true.

"No, Martin," she hesitated, "only I was

surprised."

"Yes; you must have had a good deal to surprise you lately. Well-I saw you just now sitting in the window. Is my

brother at home 1"

She had given her hand to Martin almost without thinking, because he seemed to expect it, and he was holding it still and looking at her with eyes full of painful, eager questions. Her sad and frightened face was almost enough to answer them, and for a moment or two she did not speak.

"It is a great pity you came here," she

murmured at last.

Wasn't it natural?" said "Why ? Martin.

"Yes, I dare say. But I must tell you -Henry is so miserable-and he says he cannot see you-and that if you come here he will have to resign and go away. You see, there is our little boy to think of. Oh, I am so sorry, Martin !" she cried, almost passionately. "Why did it happen ? What does it mean ?"

"I can solemnly assure you," Martin said, "that you know as much about that as I do. It is past explanation, Daisy. was booked to go to the dogs somehow, and so I chose this stupid way. So old Henry won't have anything to do with me? Well, that settles it. Good-bye. Don't think I am friendless. I shall do very well."

He had turned away; but there was something in his manner that made her

call him back.

"Well, Angelina?" he said, and the slight laugh with which he spoke, the old name which he once gave her for fun, when she was engaged to his brother, touched her more than any amount of solemn penitence. Her eyes were full of tears as she looked up at him.

"Don't vex yourself about me, you kind soul," he said. "I've got some money, you know, and I shall find plenty of friends, people who won't be ashamed of me.

to throw me overboard. He owes it to himself, and you, and the small boy, as you say. Not to mention all the dignitaries of the Church. I ought to have seen all that. But I only thought of myself, and it seemed the one chance of being pulled out of the mud. Henry has done that for me, more times than you know, and I forgot that his patience might have an end to it."

"Don't go, Martin," said Margaret Brett, stretching out her hand. "Sit down here, and talk to me a little. Now listen—I don't believe this thing is true. There has been some great mistake. Tell me it is not true, and I will believe you-and I will make Henry believe you too. Yes, indeed, I will."

"My dear Daisy, you won't do that,

because it is true," he said.

He sat down on the old bench in the corner, leaned his face on his hands, and broke out into deep, uncontrollable sobs. She stood beside him in great distress, almost terror, for they were in a public path, where any one might pass at any moment, where the Dean himself, as sunset faded and twilight stole over the city, might walk round to look for her. She had had a very quiet, uneventful life, quite away from any bitter passions and tragedies; and in this strange experience she did not at all know what to do. Her whole soul was full of pity for Martin; and, for herself, she would have welcomed him to her house, and given him all the kindness she could, without any fear of evil results for her boy. But these generous instincts were not backed up by any great moral courage. She was gentle and shy; she was a little afraid of her husband, and did not even feel that she could reason with him in this affair, his determination being so strong.

As she stood there with her puzzled thoughts, Martin recovered himself, and begged her pardon for being such a fool.

"No; it is all true enough, worse luck," he said. "And it is true, too, that I can't explain it. I couldn't stand it; the fire was too much for me. I ordered my men to retire at the wrong moment; I spoilt the attack, and gave the enemy an ad-I behaved like a coward—so vantage. they tell me, for I swear to you, Daisy, I did not know what I was doing. I was mad with terror. It was panic, and you know what that is—a madness sent by the gods. The authorities were quite right to be hard on me; they couldn't overlook a see now, I ought to have expected Henry | thing of that kind, especially in a man who had seen so much service. On the whole, they were very kind, and hushed it up all they could. And I have thought several times since that I must really be a coward, or I should have shot myself by this time!"

Daisy remembered that the Dean had

said the same thing.

"I think it is much braver to go on living," she said, in a low voice.

Martin laughed. "Do you? A jolly life, with plenty of friends?" he said.

She sat gravely down on the bench beside him. "Tell me about your friends. What sort of people are they?" she said.

"Not a sort that would interest you,' he answered. "But they are all I have."

"And you came to us that you might

not be thrown with them?"

"More fool I," he said, and laughed again. "To expect, after having made a black sheep of one's self, to live in a safe, comfortable fold, with nice white lambs like you!"

"Where are you going ?" she said, after

a pause

"To London, for the present. I shall catch the last train."

Mrs. Brett sat silent for a few minutes,

looking away into the fading sky.

"Don't leave us yet, Mattin," she said at last. "After what Henry said, I can't take you to the Deanery. But there are an old man and his wife who keep boats—nice, clean people—near the river-side; they let lodgings often in the summer, but they have no one now. Let me show you where they live; and you might at least stay there a week or two, and Henry may change his mind. I will manage to see you now and then, alone."

He looked at her with rather a curious

smile.

"Well, Daisy, as you ask me, show me where the house is," he said. "I will take care to be unknown; and I won't introduce myself to my nephew."

Mrs. Brett went back in the twilight to the Deanery, from the dark, foggy street by the river-side, rather uneasy at what

she had done.

Late that night she ventured to say something more about Martin, but the Dean answered, very gravely:

"My dear Margaret, I shall be obliged to you if you will not mention the subject

again."

Mrs. Brett's heart sank within her. It seemed, after all, as if she ought to have let Martin go down-hill at his own pace.

"What kept you out so late?" said the Dean. "I was beginning to be uneasy about you. That river mist in the evening is so unhealthy."

"I was walking about; the sky was beautiful," she answered, a little falteringly.

"Don't go into the river streets if you can help it," said the Dean. "I hear that there are cases of fever and diphtheria."

All that long, hot night, as Margaret Brett listened to the chimes of the Cathedral, her conscience went on telling her that for the first time in her married life she had deceived her husband, and almost told a lie. Poor Martin, it seemed, was not the only coward in the family.

CHAPTER II.

DURING the next day or two, Martin Brett kept himself very quiet in his lodgings. To the old people there he gave his name simply as "Martin," and they made no further enquiries. Trusting his sister-in-law completely, he felt quite sure that he should either see her or hear from her soon, and, being of a hopeful nature, he flattered himself that her pleading with the Dean would soon be successful. any case, he felt that the chance was worth waiting for. He was grateful for her faith in him, for the scorn of his own people was to him almost unbearable. He had chosen to think, when he wrote so boldly to his brother, that it was in fact an extreme of disgrace which he would never

be called upon to suffer.

After two days he began to grow rest-He went out in the evening, and haunted that quiet corner of the Close, where Daisy and he had had their talk. The old walls were there, the clustering ivy, the evening light-though never so brilliant again—but she did not come. The next day he prowled round near the Deanery gate, and under the garden wall. He saw carriages driving in and out, people crossing the garden, but no sign of her, or of the Dean. He looked up at the great library window-watched it for an hour; but no one came to sit there, no bright face looked out between the rugged He would not ask any old mullions. questions, though plenty of people passed him, and some looked at him rather curiously. He told himself that Daisy was doing her best for him; that she was a woman with many acquaintances, and a great deal to do; that she was waiting to bring him some good news. But with it all, as hours and days followed each other, he became terribly uneasy, and was weighed down by a feeling that something was wrong. On the whole he thought that she must have told her husband everything, and that he must have been very angry, and must have forbidden her to see or speak to his wretched brother again. It was unlike old Henry, that sort of hardness; but the gentlest and most good-natured men may be in some circumstances the most severe; and he had his position to think of, and his boy. Still, Daisy was bound to send him some communication, some message, even if the worst had happened. was nothing for it, clearly, but patience.

On Saturday he bought the local paper, and saw that his brother was to preach the next morning in the Cathedral. He determined to creep into some corner, and hear him. His wife was certain to be there, too.

There was a large congregation at the Cathedral. In those days it had not been restored, so that the outside was more impressive than the inside; it was piled with upholstery, and a great rood-loft blocked up the choir. It took Martin some time to discover that neither the Dean nor Mrs. Brett was in the Cathedral at all. Soon after the grey-headed Canon in residence had begun his sermon, which promised to be long and dry, one of his hearers, sad and restless, escaped from the Cathedral into the quiet sunshine of that almost autumn day. All was still in the Close; the iron gates of the Deanery were shut. At first Martin thought that no living creature was in sight; but soon, as he wandered near those gates, he saw that a little boy was standing inside them, gazing through the bars like a wild creature in a cage. Martin's first instinct was to go and speak to the little fellow, to ask about his father and mother; but then he remembered his words to Daisy-" I won't introduce myself to my nephew;" and he walked sternly

"Do you mind stopping a minute, please?" called out a sweet, rather peremptory childish voice from behind the bars.

"Certainly; can I do anything for you?" Martin replied. And now he walked straight up to the gate, and stood looking at the boy.

He was a fine little fellow of eight or nine years old, with bright blue eyes, and a quantity of brown curls. It was a handsome, proud little face, more like the Dean than Mrs. Brett, but most like what

the elder Martin himself had been as a

boy.

"I only wanted to ask if you had seen a knife anywhere. A splendid knife with four blades. I dropped it somewhere in the Close the last time I was out—and it has not been found yet. They are all so busy; but I want my knife; it is so very useful, and papa gave it me on my last birthday."

"Why don't you come out and look for it?" said Martin. "No, I have not seen

The child flushed up and answered: "Mamma does not like me to go about alone. She thinks I am too young. I don't agree with her. But I promised, you see, and one must keep one's promises—especially now that she is ill."

"Is she ill ?" said Martin, almost

"Why do you look like that?" asked the boy. "You don't know mamma." "What is the matter with her?"

"Oh, she has been in bed for days and days. People are ill sometimes, aren't they! I don't know what is the matter. They won't let me go into her room."

"Martin, Martin!" It was the Dean's voice calling from the house. The poor fellow who stood outside his gate fancied, at first, that the call was for him. He had almost answered it, almost put out his hand to lift the latch, when the little boy raced off, crying, "Papa's calling me. Please look for my knife."

The elder Martin turned away, and walked down to the river.

That evening, and the next day, he asked for news of Mrs. Brett from several casual people, and at one or two of the shops near the Close. They told him she was very ill of fever, delirious, and not

expected to recover.

An old woman, who sold fruit under the archway, seemed to know more than any one else, and spoke with more feeling; she said Mrs. Brett had been a good friend to her. She told the sympathetic stranger that the Dean hardly ever left his wife's room, that it had been difficult to find any one to nurse her, as the fever was supposed to be catching—those were not the days of trained nurses — and that a lady in the neighbourhood had driven in on Sunday afternoon and taken little Master Martin away, greatly to his indignation.

"He's a high-spirited little gentleman," said the old dame. "He's afraid of nothing, bless you. He wanted to sit up with his

mamma, the cook told me. He'll grow up to be a fine soldiering gentleman, like his uncle, the Captain, as they talk of. But, maybe you've never heard tell of him; he's out in the Crimea."

"Is he?" said Martin indifferently.

In the evening he went back to his old woman; she dried her eyes with her apron and told him that Mrs. Brett was dying. The doctor had been there, and said she could not live through the night. The old fruitseller was rather startled at the effect of this news.

The strange young man who had been talking to her walked straight away, and in another minute she saw him open the Deanery gate, and disappear into the

garden.

Martin would have found it difficult to give any very clear reason for what he was doing. Partly it was the necessity of finding out whether he was really and truly to lose his only friend; partly the feeling that, at such a moment, knowing her wishes, his brother could not be hard upon him; and partly, indeed, the less selfish thought that he might be of use; for in his rough soldier life he had seen a good deal of illness; and if all Daisy's neighbours were fools enough to be afraid of the fever-Martin would have been surprised, just then, if any one had reminded him that he was a coward !

He walked quickly up the broad drive to

the door.

It was a calm, golden evening like that one a week ago; and the old house in its quaint, old-world precincts, lay very silent; the cedars on the lawn threw great black shadows across the gold. The door was standing open; nobody was there; and Martin, after a moment's hesitation, walked

straight into the house.

In the hall he stood still and listened; no sound; and then with quick, light steps he ran upstairs. Of course, the house was quite unknown to him; and he now found himself in a long, carpeted passage with many doors. He went on slowly and noiselessly till near the end of the passage, along which the evening light was falling from a window to the west, a door opened suddenly and a woman came out. She almost screamed, but checked herself and stared at him.

"It's the Captain !" she exclaimed under

She was an old nurse of Daisy's, who remembered him long ago.

He instantly wondered whether she had he is, really !"

heard of his disgrace; and no one can tell the strange cheering and comfort that came to him as she went on to whisper her joy at seeing him, her sorrow that he should arrive at such a moment.

"But you will be a comfort to poor master!" she said. "I do all I can; but I'm not strong, you see, sir. You won't be

afraid of the fever ?"

"Of course not," said Martin impatiently. "Where is he? Which is her room? It is not true? She is not really -dying 1"

The old woman shook her head, and

pointed to a door.

"Inside there," she said.

Martin went gently in, and she closed the door behind him. He found himself in a small ante-room, with a door, half open, leading into an inner room. stood still, hesitating. At this moment he quite forgot his own disgrace, and how great a trial the meeting with his brother might be. His only thought was how not to startle him, or to break in upon him too rashly in his gad watch beside his wife. Then to be of use to them boththat was the object in Martin's mind. As he stood there, suddenly Daisy's voice, sharp and trembling, came to him through the open door.

"I couldn't send him away, Henry. He is there, down at old Short's. A woman stopped me as I passed, and told me that her child had the fever. You see you have got a coward for a wife as well. But no one has a right to call Martin a coward. He told me all about it. It was panic - panic, do you understand? Isn't that possible? He was not afraid to come to you. He loves us all, and wants so much to be with us. Oh, I wish you would go and look for him. If you would once shake hands with him, he would never be a coward again-and the walk would do you so much good, dear !"

"Only go to sleep, my child," the Dean answered softly. "I will do anything you wish, if you will be quiet and go to sleep."

"You will fetch Martin !"

"Yes, yes; I will fetch Martin," he said. Presently Then there was silence. Martin heard the Dean move across the He sighed wearily, and muttered room. to himself:

"This dreadful wandering! All imagination, of course. Poor darling ! she can't get him out of her head. I wonder where

Then he pushed the ante-room door a little farther, muttering, "More air!" and atood face to face with his brother.

The Dean turned white with surprise, and checked an exclamation, which might have been an angry one. For a moment they looked at each other silently; then Martin's eyes fell, and he turned half-away. This was far the most dreadful thing he had yet gone through; to look at that kind face, worn and aged by the last week's anxiety; to remember the old days when his brother pulled him out of every trouble, and to feel that now his brother was ashamed of him, and that never, in this life or any other, could he have his old place again.

"How did you come here, Martin?"

said the Dean, very gently.

"I found my way into the house, somehow," Martin answered. "I have been in this room a few minutes."

"Did you hear what she said ?"

"Yes, some of it. She was not wandering, you know. It was true. Last Monday evening I met her out there in the Close. She would not let me come here, of course; but she told me not to go away at once—and now—I felt obliged to come. You will let me help you? I know a lot about nursing."

The Dean looked hard at Martin with those clear, handsome eyes of his, which seemed to see through everything. He began in a doubtful tone. "You are not——" but never finished that sentence. He held out his hand, took Martin's hand

and grasped it hard.

"Well, old fellow, come in," he said.
"If she knows you, she will be glad;" and
to Daisy's two tall nurses went quietly into

her room.

The doctor said she was dying; she could not live through the night; and when he saw her, Martin thought so too. She made no sign of knowing him; she seemed to have fallen into a stupor. The evening faded; the darkness of night came on. Martin, the coward, watched with his brother through those long hours, expecting that every trembling breath of Daisy's would be her last.

CHAPTER III.

One day in November, the sun was shining softly down on the cloisters of the Cathedral, and on the green space they enclose, where some of those who used to live in the Cathedral shadow are laid in

their last resting-place. On one of those graves lay something rather unusual; a flat cross of red granite, only marked with initials—"M. B., 1855"; and then the words: "Whosoever shall lose his life

shall preserve it."

In the stillness and the sunshine of that late autumn day, through the Deanery garden, under the great trees of the Close with their lingering yellow leaves, came the Dean, with his wife and child. She was white and thin, a shadow of her former self, and leaned on her husband's arm. The boy walked beside them, his bright face rather graver than usual, for his father was talking to him, and he was listening eagerly. It was not long since he had been allowed to come back to them. They had been away at the sea, since Mrs. Brett recovered from the fever; and it was not easy for the child, who had been parted from them, to understand all the story of those weeks.

"I have a message for you, Martin," said the Dean. "And first, do you know

what this is?"

He took a knife out of his pocket, and held it out to the boy.

"My knife!" cried Martin. "No, papa, it's not my knife; it is a nicer one."

"Do you remember telling somebody one day at the gate, that you had lost your knife? Asking him to look for

"Oh, yes. He was a good sort of fellow. I liked his face; I seemed to know him. I have often thought of him since. He was in such a state because mother was ill, and he asked me why I didn't come out into the Close and look for my knife myself; but I couldn't you know."

"Well, my boy," said the Dean, "this was his knife, and he asked me to give it

o vou."

"Oh, how splendid!" cried the small Martin, examining one blade after another. "But when did you see him? Where is he now?"

The Dean's blue eyes looked sad and strange as they followed a flight of birds across the sky, past the great Cathedral tower.

"Where is he? He has gone away from us," he said. "He has been ordered home."

"What do you mean? Mamma, what does he mean?" exclaimed Martin, darting round to her and seizing her hand.

"Tell me," she said, looking down at him, and her eyes were very strange too, "did you never wonder who he was, that

kind man who talked to you?"

"Who was he? Who was he? I want to know. But what does papa mean, and where is he now? I should like to see

him again."

"He was a soldier," said Mrs. Brett, "and you know his name very well. Listen, Martin-he had the same name as you; and he came home here just before I was ill, and after Mrs. Long had taken you away, for fear of the fever, he came and helped your father to nurse me. And he sat up with me night after night, and helped your father to do everything for me. He was not very strong—we found out afterwards that he had gone through a great deal, and had been very ill before he came to us. But he never thought of himself, or of the danger of the fever; he gave his whole care and his whole strength to me; in fact, he kept me alive—he saved my life when the doctors had given me up, over and over again. And then, when I was just a little better, he broke downhe took the fever himself, and in a few days he died, for he had no strength left to stand against it."

"Oh, mother, he was a hero!" the boy

cried, his blue eyes flashing.

A curious look passed over the Dean's face, but he said nothing.

"Well, and who has always been your

hero ?" asked Mrs. Brett.

"My chief hero of all? Uncle Martin,

of course. It was Uncle Martin."

The little fellow turned quite pale, and bit his lips hard, squeezing his mother's hand. He had a horror of crying, and he would not cry; but he could not help the break in his voice when he said to her, a few minutes later:

"I did see him, you know, and he saw me. I expect he knew who I was, though I didn't know him. Of course he did, as he sent me his knife. It is a splendid treasure. But why didn't he come straight in, instead of standing at the gate?"

For a moment Martin had no answer to this. But then his father said very

gravely:

"I did not know that he had arrived in the town. He did not wish to take me by surprise. Further than that we can't explain."

They walked on through the cloisters, and out across the green grass, in the soft sunshine, to Martin's grave. There they stood, looking down at the cross.

"But why didn't you put all his name,

papa, and a lot more? Why didn't you put his regiment, and his battles, and all that, so that every one might know he was a hero?"

Little Martin looked injured, almost angry. His cheeks were flushed, and he was nearer crying than he had been before.

"Because I knew what he would wish,"

said the Dean.

"But he was a hero—he was, he was a hero. He was the finest man that ever lived, and you haven't even put his name!" and at last little Martin gave way; he flung himself down on the grass, with his face against the cold stone, and sobbed bitterly.

The Dean turned away in great pain, "What can we do?" he said to his wife.

"Will he ever know the truth ?"

"We must leave the future," Daisy whispered. "We must let him remember all that we want to remember ourselves. You and I must think of Martin as a hero—he gave his life for mine."

FIRST LOVE.

BY SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

The dazzle of the sunshine,
And the ripple of the sea,
And the west wind laughing lowly,
For you, Love, and for me.
For the tide is at the flowing,
The sun is high at noon,
Young life is at its zenith,
The year is at its June.

The dazzle of the sunshine,
And the ripple of the sea;
The heart that is your own, Love,
Is calling "come to me;"
Why waste the precious hours,
In faltering or regret?
Too soon the waves will darken,
Too soon the sun will set.

The dazzle of the sunshine,
And the ripple of the sea;
While first love's mystic glamour,
That makes it good to be,
Is lapping earth and heaven
In the glory of the gleam
That shines on life once only,
The light of Love's young dream.

A SUMMER CLOUD.

BY ELLEN MULLEY.

CHAPTER I. AN OUTSIDER.

IT was by no means the biggest or grandest house in the neighbourhood, but there was not a prettier or a pleasanter.

Cecilia Western, who lived there, would not have exchanged its twisted, starlinghaunted chimneys, its mullioned windows, and its ruddy, sun-kissed walls for the finest place you could have offered her. Cecilia always stoutly maintained that there were no such trees, such turf, and, above all, no such roses even at the Court, which was Sir John Deshon's, and the show place of the neighbourhood.

Cecilia, who was nearly one-and-twenty, and had seen a little of the world, always came back from her London visit or her run abroad more in love with the old home than ever; and more in love, if that were possible, with the father and mother counting the hours there till her return.

Mr. Western, Cecilia's father, was Rector of the parish, although he did not live at the Rectory, but left that, as he left the clerical attire and the modest stipend, to his Curate. He went about among his people, nevertheless, and preached them a

sermon every Sunday.

He was decidedly a handsome man, tall and thin, but his appearance was sadly spoilt, as Cecilia told him, by a disfiguring stoop, entirely brought about by a habit of poking and prying with a pair of very short-sighted eyes into the private concerns of the various creeping creatures which were rash enough to cross his path.

Mrs. Western, though a young woman still, was too much of an invalid to look after anything beyond her flower-beds and her bees. So it devolved upon Cecilia to become the companion, and, in some sort, the guardian of her father's steps.

And thus, too, it devolved upon Cecilia's grandmother, Lady Western, to show the girl something of that other and larger world which lay outside of Freshford and the Priory gates.

Her grandmother, the girl declared, must be a witch or a fairy. She seemed blessed with a perpetual youth. She was always

at hand when wanted.

It was she who presented Miss Western, took her to balls, dinners, concerts, and picnics up the river. Then there were the runs abroad to recruit-Paris, Rome, Florence, the Italian lakes, the Swiss mountains. Cecilia saw and basked in the sunshine of them all, and came back happier, more delighted to be at home than ever.

It was early evening towards the middle of July. Cecilia, who had been in town for the past two months, was returning home once more. Father and mother were looking out for her now. From the terrace where Mrs. Western sat, and where the Rector sat one moment and could catch occasional glimpses of the white, dusty road along which the ponycarriage must come.

Of course, it was grandmamma who had borne Cecilia off. She had come on a long visit to the Priory in the early part of the year, and had been greatly exercised by what she saw there.

She spoke her mind very sharply.

"Poor Sophie!" she said. "She is so good, poor dear; she would see nothing objectionable in anybody. A baby might take her in. But you, Tertius, who should know the world better, you are as blind as one of your own beetles!"

"Are beetles blind ?" murmured the Rector gently, twinkling his own short-

sighted orbs.

"I don't care whether they are blind or It is you I am talking about. Pray

how long has this been going on ?"

"My dear mother," said the Rector, "if by this you mean young Bateson, I don't very well see that I can shut my doors on a man, and he my own Curate, because he happens not to be a match for my daughter."

"Then get rid of him before there is

any mischief done."

The Rector's eyes twinkled again, he

gave a little twist to his mouth.

"You have heard of Colorado-beetle?" Lady Western, who was accustomed to her son's odd starts and tangents, looked at him with the merest glance of enquiry.

"Well ?" she said.

"And you know what a Curate is?"

"Yes," said her ladyship, sharply. "And very objectionable and undesirable articles I consider them."

"Just so. Well, then, they're one and the same. You can get rid of one about as easily as the other.

"Then I shall take away Cecilia at

once."

It was the only thing to be done. Lady Western, who had been proud enough of her own daughters, was prouder still of her granddaughter. "Not one of you was ever half so beautiful," she frankly told them. "And to think of that brother of yours seeing what was going on-so far as the young man was concerned, I mean-and taking no steps. As for Cecilia, I cannot You know how wilful, how headstrong she can be. And then there are all those absurd, new-fangled ideas she pretends to hold about everybody being equal, and so forth—a girl brought up as she has strode restlessly to and fro the next, they been!" cried the indignant lady. "But as for the young man, what he means is plain enough. It is of himself he is thinking. He is not a gentleman; he has no scruples—only ambition. Oh, I know, my dears. I made enquiries, as your brother ought to have done. It was only fair. His people are something too dreadful! And to think that a young man like that—a young man who could scarcely find her in gloves, and who has worse than no connections, should dare, because he wears uncomfortable collars and a coat like a bathing-gown, to aspire to a granddaughter of mine!"

So Cecilia, who was the unwitting cause of so much anxiety, and who had been safely carried off, saw the big world once more; and now here she was coming back again to the old life, and, alas! to the old danger. And the old danger met her on the very threshold. There was no familiar figure, tall and stooping, to greet Cecilia, as she alighted at the sleepy little roadside station. The father, who should have been there, was nowhere to be seen. But there was a very much younger man with a dark, handsome face, and a pair of dark, fiery, rather bold-looking eyes, who, certainly, had no business to be there at all. Could old Lady Western have been there to see, she would have hustled her granddaughter back into the railwaycarriage, or flown away with her on a broom-stick, like the witch-grandmother Cecilia often declared her to be. for the Rector, who was in fact the real culprit, I don't know what he might have done, or said. He was sufficiently annoyed and irritated as it was. Of course he had been "poking" about somewhere, and the pony-carriage had at last been sent off without him. But it could not be long now before its return. The Rector was looking at his watch for the twentieth time. The little pink flush was deepening on gentle Mrs. Western's faded cheek.

"Let us hope, my dear," the latter was saying, "that the danger is past and gone. It is possible we have distressed ourselves for nothing all along. It is so difficult to tell with a proud, yet generoushearted girl like our Cecilia. She is sure to take the weakest side. That others are, perhaps, not always quite considerate, quite kind, is only—"

The Rector broke in with a little chuckle:
"I am certainly not going to be kind enough to give him my daughter, my dear.
I would help him to a Bishopric tomorrow, if I could. Colonial, of course, and the farther away the better; but there

my affection ends. But my mother was right, and I ought to bave made enquiries. One has a right, at least, to do that, when one is going to make a man free of his And this young Curate may have a right to his ambitions, and so may I; but certainly one of mine is not to see the Rev. Mr. Bateson my son-inlaw. If it had only been Cincinnatus, now," the Rector, who was given to finding names for people, went on more quietly; and, as he spoke, a grey-clad figure came suddenly in sight at the far end of the paddock. As the young man came over the grass with a quick, swinging step, the Rector went across the lawn to meet him, and presently they both came up to where Mrs. Western was seated. The new-comer looked sharply round him. His blue eyes clouded. There was a look of genuine disappointment on his brown, honest face, as he stooped and gently kissed the delicate one that was raised to his.

"What is it?" he said, looking from one to the other. "Isn't she coming, after all?"

He stopped. Something in the Rector's face brought a relieved look to his own. He burst out laughing.

"So that is it!" he cried. "Why didn't you send to me, mater? You might have known there would be a beast of some kind stopping the road."

"Excuse me," interrupted the Rector amiably; "but surely I see the carriage now, there by the church."

"My dear Tertius," said his wife laughing, "you have thought that so many times."

"He is right this time, though," cried their visitor. "It is the carriage, sure enough; but not anywhere near where you are looking with those remarkable eyes of yours, Rector. But who has Cecilia with her? Oh, yes! Evans is there all right; but there is some one else there, too. Now they are out of sight again. Yes; there certainly was a third person."

The young man glanced uneasily at the two elder people. He began to move about restlessly.

"I think we may be atrolling towards the gates, now," he said presently. "They must be here in a minute or two."

And then he and the Rector, who was feeling uneasy, and guilty too, moved off. The two passed through the wide-open gates, and went out into the hot, white, sunny road, and stood there, anxiously

looking towards the bend where the great horse-chestnuts flung their shadows, and round which the carriage must come. And here it was at last.

The quick beat of hoofs; the rattle of light wheels; a little cloud of dust; and then emerging from it the grey pony; the carriage; Cecilia; Evans. And yes, some one sitting beside Cecilia. Cecilia was out of the carriage and shaking her fore-finger reproachfully at the Rector. She smiled and nodded at the Rector's Cincinnatus. She was very nearly as tall as her father. It required very little more than the Rector's usual stoop to bring her young, softly - glowing cheeks to his. The girl was all love and eager greeting. She did not notice the little annoyed look which struggled with the smiles on her father's face. The red, angry flush on that of his companion she saw not at all. Her own late companion she appeared to The two young have quite forgotten. men who had nodded and said, "Do! Bateson," "Do! Deshon," stood looking at one another with anything but friendly glances.

Evans rattled the pony-carriage through the open gateway. "Come, Deshon," cried the Rector. "Afternoon, Bateson." then the young man with the dark, handsome face and the black angry eyes was left standing outside. Cecilia, walking up the drive between the Rector and young Deshon, suddenly remembered him. turned and nodded to him over her shoulder. "Good-bye!" she cried, and waved her hand to him. "I wonder what he was doing at the station," she said. "Yes, of

course I brought him on."

CHAPTER II. FORTUNE'S FAVOURITE.

Bateson stood a moment watching the three disappearing figures with a wild feeling of rage against fortune, himself, every one. Against the young fellow striding along so gaily by Miss Western's side, most of all. Arthur Deshon, the Rector's Cincinnatus, had, from the first moment of their acquaintance, always seemed to the unknown, ambitious, striving young churchman all that he himself would have asked to be. Birth, means, positionall that the other lacked—were this fortunate young soldier's. If only poor Bateson could have laid claim to even one of these, he might have been consoled. But he could not, and all was in Deshon's favour. Deshon, who was a Baronet's son and

could "call cousins" with half the county, the Westerns included; while he, Bateson, was possessed only of connections of whom he could not bring himself to speak, and the very nearest and dearest of whom he would have shuddered to have seen entering his gates. The two young men had settled in the neighbourhood much about the same time. That is, Bateson came into his curacy, while young Deshon, who had been knocking about the world with his regiment for the last ten years, suddenly declared himself to have had enough of the "red rag;" and, taking up one of his father's farms, turned his sword into a ploughshare, and settled himself to a peaceful life, and to the winning of Cecilia Western, his boyish companion and far

away cousin.

This was now twelve months ago, and the two young men, who had begun by being fairly good friends, had by this time become almost open enemies. Bateson could not forgive his rival his better fortunes; and Deshon, who chanced to know something of who Bateson was, could not forgive the young man for what he looked upon as his want of principle and For candour in approaching Cecilia. a man it may be different; but for a woman, he told himself - a woman brought up as Cecilia had been, the associations, the prejudices, the traditions of a life cannot be thrown aside at will. He tormented himself by imagining Cecilia Bateson's wife. He tried to picture her taken from the home, the life she knew, with all its refinements of associations and surroundings, and suddenly confronted with that other unknown life, those new sur-roundings. Then, like Lady Western, Deshon declared it should never be.

Cecilia's visit to her grandmother this spring and summer had been a time of peace and almost of forgetfulness for the good people at the Priory, and also for Arthur Deshon, who went there every day. Now and then the Curate made his way there too, and the young men would be quite civil to one another. But here was the Rector's daughter back again, and the old trouble, the old worries, the old

enmities beginning all over again. Bateson, whom we left standing outside

the Priory gates that July evening, had no intention of remaining out in the cold. He came to see the Rector on business in the mornings, and would look in on the Rector's wife and daughter in the afternoons. The Rector, who was a trifle given to satire, and practised on himself as often as on anybody else, would blink his eyes and twist his mouth when he saw his Curate approaching.

"That is a very nice young man," he would say to Mrs. Western and Cecilia.

"Was ever Rector so beloved!"

And then he would hasten to make his escape before the very nice young man could catch him. The Rector's wife, who was too kindly-natured to deal even necessary snubbings to anybody, welcomed the young clergyman hospitably enough. Cecilia seemed honestly glad to see him. Was she anything more than that? The anxious parents could not tell. They watched the girl—she little dreamed how anxiously — but they could not tell. Deshon, who watched her more anxiously even than they, even he could not tell. As for the young man with the sombre, handsome face, and the dark, defiant eyes, he knew least of all.

So the days sped by, and Cecilia passed through them, smiling on everybody. She drove the two young men nearly to desperation. Who does not know the sweet, gracious ways which make a beautiful, gently-bred woman so irresistibly attractive, and yet may mean

little-nothing!

Deshon, for one, knew them well enough, and how little they might mean, and so feared as yet to speak. Bateson, to whom they were less familiar, and so more dangerous, feared, too, to speak. But perhaps it was rather Cecilia's parents that he feared, than Cecilia herself. So the days went on, and the words which might at least have set all doubts at rest remained unspoken.

Deerbolts Hall, where Deshon had taken up his residence, was little more than a mile from the Priory gates, and, different as the places were, was admitted by Miss Western to be almost as delightful. It had, indeed, been the Mauor House until within the last quarter of a century, and Deshons had always lived there. Now there was a Deshon there again, which was

as it should be.

There was an old-time, even feudal look about the place which, notwithstanding Cecilia's advanced and liberal views, delighted her. It had solid, grey walls, which kept the house warm in winter, and deliciously cool in summer. But for the ivy which clung about it, it might, perhaps, have looked a trifle too stern and solid. A moat had once surrounded it, but that had

long since been done away with, and where duckweed once ran riot, flower-beds—which Deshon always called Cecilia's—now blazed odorous and bee-haunted.

It was a morning in September. Cecilia's flower-beds were beginning to look a little faded and straggly. Beyond the old Hall the autumn fields—where the golden corn had waved and rustled—stood reaped, and

bare, and silent.

The great chestnuts in the avenue fluttered fans which began to look burnt and ragged. Deshon, who was standing idly, and a trifle out of spirits, on his door-steps, caught sight of Cecilia, of whom he was just then thinking, coming up between the line of trees. It was nothing very unusual.

Cecilia would have come every morning of the week if there had been anything she wanted to say, or if the fancy had taken her. But she had not been quite so often there of late.

Deshon hurried down to meet her.

"Well, Cecilia," he cried, "have you come to look after your flower-beds? I am afraid their glory is departing."

"No," Cecilia said, "my errand is much more prosaic. Like Beatrice, 'I am sent

to bid you come to dinner.' "

"But, not like Beatrice, 'against your

"I am not quite so sure of that now I think of it. You have not been behaving as well as you might have done lately, sir."

And Cecilia gave a little frown, which

Arthur quite understood.

She looked, Deshon thought, as the veritable Beatrice must have done. The exercise, the slight tinge of autumn in the air, had brought a colour to her creamy cheeks. There was a mischievous sparkle in her eyes, a suspicion of laughter lurked about the curves of her pretty mouth.

Deshon stood looking at her a moment

without answering.

"Well," Cecilia cried with a pretty impatience, "are you thinking what excuses you can make?"

"No," Deshon said quickly. "Of course I will come. But what is it? Who

is coming?"

"Oh! for that matter, nobody—at least, nobody you will consider anybody. Mr. Bateson has an old college friend staying with him, and the pater has asked them. I told him he ought to."

And Cecilia looked at her companion with, as he felt, a little challenge in her

eye.

Deshon's face flushed. He began switching with the stick he carried at Cecilia's flowers, for they were by the flower-beds

"I don't see that I am wanted," he said

moodily.

"Oh! neither do I!" And Miss Western made a little grimace which the other did

not see. "But please yourself."

"How can I please myself," Deshon cried angrily, "when you are always doing what I don't want you to do-what no one wants you to do ? "

"What do you mean?" Cecilia said stiffly, though she knew very well what the

young man meant.

"I mean-you know quite well what I

mean, Cecilia !"

Deshon's voice dropped; he gave her a

little appealing look.

"If you mean that you think we had | better say 'good morning,' I quite agree ; with you. No, don't trouble to come with me, please."

And Cecilia, with a little arresting motion of her hand that matched her words, turned her back upon the master of Deerbolts, leaving him "planted there," as our neighbours have it, on his own soil, but not lord enough of it to march down his own avenue when a wilful woman bade

him stay his steps.

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Arthur Deshon dined at the Priory that Cecilia met him with eyebrows evening. slightly uplifted and a grave, cold handshake, that he might look upon as a welcome or not as he pleased. But Deshon was quite prepared for this. He was, too, quite as fully prepared to find his rival greeted with more than usual graciousness. Cecilia went in to dinner on his arm. She talked to him, listened to him, smiled approval on all he said. She wanted to show everybody how narrow, how illiberal she thought they were. She wanted also to show Deshon that she intended to be her own mistress. Bateson was radiant. He scarcely took the pains to conceal his triumph. He looked at Deshon, and even at the Rector, with something very like defiance in his bold, fierce eyes. Mrs. Western and Deshon did their best to entertain the Rectory guest—a quiet young man of the name of Price. But the dinner was scarcely a success. The Rector was in one of his most sarcastic moods.

"I am getting up some tennis for Friday," Bateson was saying. "I hope you will all come; you, please, Mrs. party. I am not asking justwas going to say anybody. He caught the Rector's eye, and substituted "every-

"No," said the Rector blandly, "but you have asked the Bishop, I hope? You may be a Bishop yourself some day, you

know, Bateson.

Bateson's dark face went red.

"No, sir," he said sullenly, "I have not asked the Bishop; but I have asked Sir

John and Lady Deshon, and-

"Papa is only joking," Cecilia cried. "Come, let us leave him to entertain himself;" and then the ladies rose and the three young men followed them into the drawing-room. But the young men did not remain much longer; indeed, there was very little of the evening left. Cecilia and her father accompanied the three to the gates. Deshon found himself for a moment by Cecilia's side. night was still and star-lit. Every leaf and twig was distinct in the sweet, soft Overhead, the blue pulsed and throbbed with a myriad points of flame. The silence, the awful peace and stillness of it all fell upon Deshon like fire from heaven. It made him despairing—desperate.

"Cecilia," he cried, "do you know hat you are doing? Look at me!" what you are doing? Cecilia turned her face, pure, white, and cold, to his. "Do you know what you are doing?" Deshon cried again. "Cecilia, oh, my dear, my love! I must speak. If you never forgive me-never look at me

again, I must speak."

"What is it ?" Cecilia said. Her voice was trembling just a little; but the starlight showed her face cold and calm as

before.

"It is- But why do you make me say it ?" the young man cried rebelliously. "You know what it is. Look back, only upon to-night! What are you going to do? What is that fellow at the Rectory to think? The man of whom you know nothing, except that he is not even a gentleman!"

Cecilia fronted him, her He stopped. figure drawn to its full height, her eyes

blazing, her face calm no longer.

"Are you sure you have quite finished?" she said with a little drawing-in of her "There is nothing more you breath. would like to say?"

There was a moment's pause.

"Deshon, Cecilia!" It was the Rector calling. Then Arthur Deshon was standing Western. We shall not be a very large alone in the hush and quiet of the night.

CHAPTER HI. AN UNINVITED GUEST.

IF fine weather, and fine company, mean anything, the tennis party at the Rectory should have been a grand success. Bishop, as we know, was not expected; but Sir John and Lady Deshon, and, indeed, all the other notabilities, duly put in an appearance. The three from the Priory came a little late. Western with a little pink flush upon her cheek; the Rector promising himself to escape the first opportunity. Cecilia coldly beautiful, silent, scarcely heeding what was going on around her, only longing, like the Rector, to get away from it all; from herself even, if that were possible. She was thankful the arranging of the games, and attending on his various guests, kept their host pretty well employed. He came to where she and Mrs. Western sat, rather apart from the rest, but he found Cecilia stiff and unapproachable, and presently, with a gloomy, resentful face, betook himself elsewhere. The afternoon was passing away. Tea had been served in the house, the Westerns had returned to their old seats close by, when the Rectory gate clanged once more. A lady came hurrying-bustling perhaps would more accurately describe it-up the narrow path. She came straight to where Cecilia and her mother sat. She had evidently come from some distance. She looked tired, and hot, and dusty, and her dress, which was of some expensive material and rustled as she walked, was crushed and travelstained. Deshon, who had brought his mother, Lady Deshon, to sit by Mrs. Western, and was still hovering near, and who had not yet spoken to Cecilia, came forward as the new arrival reached the bench on which they sat.

"I suppose this is the Rectory," she said, addressing herself to him, "and that my son is somewhere about. Oh, don't disturb him, if he's having a party. "I'll

sit down and rest a bit first."

I am sorry to say she said "'im" and "'aving," and fanned herself with her pocket-handkerchief, as she smiled in an affable manner upon Miss Western and her mother. The poor lady was a decidedly handsome woman in her way. She had her son's dark, olive skin, though she was red and heated now, and she had, too, the same black, bold-looking eyes. Deshon had known in a moment who it must be. He made some friendly answer; he dared

not even look towards Cecilia—Cecilia who looked at no one; who did not know if she were going to laugh or cry; who only knew that she wanted to get away, and yet sat chained there in a kind of frozen shame and horror. The "woman" was

speaking again.

"Young men want looking after, as I dare say you know, ma'am," she was saying to poor trembling Mrs. Western, who could see the Curate approaching, and would have saved him if she could. But Mrs. Bateson went on. "So I have just come to have a look after my son. He is my only one, and we know what the young ladies are!" and she turned with a pleasing smile to Cecilia.

At that moment Bateson came hurrying up. His face was grey, his very figure looked shrunk and crestfallen. He scarcely noticed his mother's outstretched hand.

"Why did you come like this, mother? Why didn't you give me notice?" he cried

angrily.

Mrs. Bateson's hot face went a deeper red. Deshon stepped quickly in. "Let me take your mother in to have some tea, Bateson," he cried. "Come, Mrs. Bateson, you must be wanting something after that long, dusty walk, and your son has no end of people to see to."

Poor Bateson threw his enemy a grateful look. He glanced to where Miss Western had been sitting, but she was no

longer there.

Cecilia had escaped at last. She made her way out at the Rectory gate and across the road to the churchyard, where grey and silent amidst its graves the old church The great west door stood open, but there was no one there, only dim, halflights, cool shadows, and the echo of Cecilia's feet as she made her way up to the chancel, where was the big, square pew in which the Rector's family sat every Sunday. She went in now and shut herself noiselessly in, and sat there, her face buried in her hands. The clock in the organ loft ticked out the minutes, but she did not move, and no other sound came to break the stillness. But it was broken at There were voices in the porch, and then footsteps coming up the aisle. They were close by now, and the voices sounded It was Deshon and Mrs. Bateson, come to look at the old monuments and brasses which filled the chancel.

"Deshon, Deshon," the lady's voice was saying, "why it's nothing but Deshon! And you're a Deshon, too, and proud of it

I dare say! Oh! yes, it's very natural. It's just what my poor 'Orace would have liked. We have always tried to do our best for him, his father and I, but we couldn't give him grand relations, and monuments, and all that, you know."

"Of course you couldn't," Deshon's voice answered. "But people get on very well without them. Now, these are all Westerns you see, Mrs. Bateson, and they are my

relations, too."

There was a little thrill of tender pride in the young man's voice that reached the

girl, hidden in the big Priory pew.

"Yes!" Mrs. Bateson said. "And to think I should have been anxious about 'Orace! I knew there was a daughter, you see, but I didn't know anything more. But there, she wouldn't look at him, I dare say. Not but 'Orace——" and then the voices died away down the echoing aisle out at the open door.

Cecilia was alone again at last. Presently she came out of her hiding-place.

There was a grey, moss and lichen grown slab close by the western door, the resting-place of some long-forgotten dead. She sat herself there. The rooks were cawing noisily about the big elms by the churchyard wall; the last warm rays of the setting sun streamed full upon her; a soft evening breeze came and lifted her hair, and fanned her cheek.

Some little children came into the churchyard. They knew the Rector's daughter quite well, and toddled up to where she sat. But she took no notice of them; she might have been one of the dead lying quiet and unheeding at her

feet.

When Deshon, sent by Mrs. Western, came up, he found her there. He gave his message, and was leaving her, when something in her face, her eyes, arrested him.

"Cecilia," he said quickly, "have you been—were you in there?" and he nodded

towards the open door.

But Cecilia did not answer him; she only put her hands before her burning face

Deshon drew a little nearer.

"Cecilia!" he cried once more; and then her hands fell.

And then! What was it? How was it? How can I say? In a moment they were smiling on one another, forgiving one another, forgetting everything but that they loved and understood one another.

So the Rector's Cincinnatus went through shiver th field and stubble that autumn a happy man, shoulder.

and every one was satisfied. Every one except Cecilia's grandmother, who thought her beautiful granddaughter might have done better.

"There are Deshons enough in the family," she said, "and what is the good of

a younger son ?"

Cecilia, of course, was of quite a different opinion. To her, Deshon was the one man in the world. She could not remember when she had not loved him; and in her most wilful moments she had never been unfaithful to him.

Young Bateson heard of the engagement at his own home, where he had, not without many reproaches on her part, unceremoniously borne off his mother on the very day following that of her ill-starred arrival. And then as as he found himself once more amid the old surroundings—at once so familiar and so distasteful—he may, perhaps, have felt with something very like relief that fortune had, after all, been kinder to him than he himself had meant to be.

THE GENERAL'S STORY. BY PAUL CHALLINGR.

It was still reasonably early, but too late—so the General declared, as he rose from the card-table—to think of beginning another rubber.

The ante-room was nearly empty by this time. Most of the men had retreated to their rooms to work for the impending exam., others had drifted off to the billiard-room, and only about half-a-dozen remained—smoking, lounging around, and turning over the papers. The General lighted his cigar and contributed his share to the cloud of tobacco smoke which enshrouded us, while I proffered whisky and soda with anxious hospitality.

He was the first guest I had ever entertained at mess, and I was painfully anxious to do the correct thing. The quiet, soft-spoken little man bore a name of note sufficient to make his acquaintance a distinction. I felt pleased with myself for having ventured to invite him, especially as he seemed to have enjoyed his evening.

Some one had flung up the window-sash to its highest. The stars peeped in out of a clear night-sky, and the wind blew up fresh from the sea, and set the treetops a-rustling. The General gave a shiver that reminded me of his rheumatic shoulder.

"Rather too much of a draught here," I said; but he signed to me not to close the window.

"I do not feel it cold." He spoke smilingly; but, nevertheless, looked white and serious for a few minutes, and drained

his glass hastily.

"It was 'a wind from the churchyard,' as they say in my country, that I felt just then. Do you know what that means I have been raising ghosts all the evening, and their breath blew cold on me just now, I think."

"Ghosts?" I enquired perplexedly, for these remarks seemed to "verge on the poetical," which was not my line. "Why should there be ghosts about here. We never shoot any one on the ranges nowadays——"

But the General was not listening. He had opened the big volume of photographs and was turning the leaves slowly.

"This does not go back to our time,

more's the pity."

"Were you ever here before? Did they come to Hythe in your time?" I asked. The General's "time" seemed to me to be so far—so very far back in the world's youth.

There was a slight stir of awakened interest amongst the languid groups

around us.

"You must see some changes here,"

some one remarked profoundly.

"Oh, I don't know. One set of men is very like another set of men, just as one mess dinner is exactly like another," observed some one else, with equal profundity. "Nothing changes but the Red Book."

"I am thinking of thirty years ago," said the General, with a half-sad smile. "Do you know I have met with absolutely nothing to recall the Hythe of my day till this moment," and he waved the fingers that held his cigar in the direction of the open barrack square outside, with the tree-tops tossing duskily against the "That, and the whiff of clear night-sky. salt air just now, brought it all back to me-the old mess-room with the old faces about-scraps of the old talk-" He broke off abruptly. "Don't be afraid of old stories. You'll find all I have to tell in my 'Reminiscences' some day, whenever I find it worth my while to publish them. All but one," he ended in an undertone.

"What was that?" was the necessary rejoinder.

"Oh! nothing, nothing. At least"—knocking the ash from his cigar-end thoughtfully—"I never could make anything of it, bad or good. There is a society in London which, I believe, is taking up such matters, and I have sometimes thought of writing it down for them; but it wouldn't do on consideration. They would ask for corroboration, and further evidence, and there are others to be considered. One or two would not care to have the business dragged back to recollection."

This was sheer aggravation, unless it were a ruse on the crafty General's part to provoke a demand for the story, though he shook his head and smiled sadly to himself, and resumed his cigar as if he had disposed

of the subject.

"Best let it drop," he said, answering our expectant silence. "There's one person we all know who was going through the course at that time—a very great man now, will be in the House of Lords before he dies I expect—and he mightn't thank me for remembering too much."

"Do you mean Sir Lawrence—1"

"Hush! No names. We called him Larry in those days, for a more rampant Paddy never lived. I believe he used to lie awake all night inventing bulls and blunders to astonish the Chief Instructor; but he got his first-class somehow.

"He and I, and Stavert of the Scots Guards, entered Hythe together in a brewer's van. There was no station near, and no room in the one omnibus, so we seized on the first thing on wheels we came across, put the brewer's man inside with his hop sacks, and drove in triumphantly. That sort of thing rubs the first stiffness off an intimacy I suppose; I can't imagine how else Stavert ever came to make a third with Larry and me. A dignified, prim prig of a University man, who poohpoohed the idea of the work being difficult, and used to watch our struggles and flounderings with contemptuous pity. Not a man but voted him a supercilious ass, and looked forward to his coming to grief over the shooting. There he disappointed us.

"Larry took a fancy to him for some odd reason, and we three sat together at mess that evening; and an odd lot we must have looked," observed the General in parenthesis. "Tunics were the regulation dress, and every man got himself up after the fashion of his regiment, or his own sweet will. Larry appeared with his tunic open, a mufti black waistcoat, and a

dazzling display of shirt and studs. Three top buttons unfastened, a collar and black tie was the correct thing with us, and Stavert wore the old Guard's uniform with embroidery and swallow-tails. We were as badly matched as our clothes, but some queer attraction kept us together. Stavert might, and did heap scorn on Larry a foot deep, and he never seemed to feel it; and nobody but Larry could go on playing the fool with Stavert's cold, critical eyes looking down on him from aloft. Hang him, poor fellow!" the General ended rather confusedly.

"Did you ever play the fool?" I asked

innocently.

"I suppose we all do, sometimes—did, I should say. You young fellows are wiser in your generation," and he smiled on us with a half-quizzical, half-respectful air with which I have noticed men of his standing regard the precedous sobriety of their juniors. "We didn't do much harm. The Adjutant told somebody that they scraped six-and-twenty shillings' worth of postage-stamps off the mess-room ceiling after we left; but then," apologetically, "there were so many wet Sundays. It did look like a speckled plum-pudding, I remember," he chuckled softly.

"Postage-stamps?" enquired a wonder-

ing voice.

He nodded.

"Spun up on a sixpence, sticky side up. It takes practice to make them stick. You've no time for that sort of thing. We had. Ten weeks of it. No billiardroom, no ante-room, only a small messroom; no residents, no visitors, and the Folkestone omnibus not yet invented."

I thought he was trying to drift away from his story, and as an audience of halfadozen had gathered round, looking in-

terested, I gave him a lead.

"You were telling us about Sir-

about 'Larry'?

"Ah, to be sure. You can guess the blessing he was to us in those days. It was as good as a play to get hold of Larry in his moments of expansion, and 'draw' him on any of his great subjects. Start him on the wrongs of Ireland, or his love affairs, or the history of the great old Irish family—his mother's—under whose shadow he had been brought up. I think that was the best. They were the O'Beirnes of Kilcorrig, descendants of the Irish kings, and gone to grief, like their ancestors, by this time. It was at Kilcorrig that they used to catch the salmon out of the dining-

room window, and grill them on a silver gridiron; and it was from the bog at Kilcorrig that the celebrated wisp of snipe rose, so thick, that it bent the top rail of the iron fencing it chanced to come against; and naturally it was an O'Beirne who...."

I was here conscious of a small disturbance behind me. Some one got up and pushed forward. A tall youth, stiff as a ramrod, and fierce as a fighting-

cock, but red-hot with blushes.

"I beg your pardon. Before you go any further I ought to let you know that I am an O'Beirne—one of the O'Beirnes of Kilcorrig."

We had none of us thought of him somehow. He was a quiet, unremarkable young fellow in a Canadian regiment, and his name, if distinguished, is by no means uncommon.

The General put up his eye-glass, and bowed in acknowledgement of the self-

introduction.

"Most happy, I'm sure," he murmured.
"A most unexpected pleasure. Never thought of meeting one of my friend's relations here. Had got into the way of looking upon you all as a sort of mythic race, you see. I shan't apologise for bringing your name in, for, as you'll see, my story doesn't touch you in reality. Not much of a story, after all, only a rather singular and mysterious experience that befell some of us."

O'Beirne retreated, evidently uncertain as to what further demonstration the family honour might demand of him, and sat listening under protest as it were,

silent, and grimly attentive.

"Well, you must try and imagine us all in the old mess-room over there: windows flung open as high as they'd go, and a night like this outside - soft late autumn air with stars shining clear, and everything outside perfectly still. Larry and his set had it all their own way, and were raising Bedlam at one end of the table. They were going to have a grand demonstration before leaving Hythe-to do something that should keep our memory green here they vowed! There was to be a burial of the Red Book, for one thing, at low water mark, with military honours, Dead March, firing party, and all the rest, with a Service compiled from the lectures set to popular melodies."

"I knew a man who was in that," some

one interrupted eagerly.

"Not in my time. We bequeathed the

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idea to a later generation. Larry deserves the credit of the original suggestion though. We dispersed quietly and tamely enough; you shall hear why. They were all hard at work hammering out the doggerel, each man yelling out his own idea to his own tune as it struck him, and only unanimous when it came to 'Ri tooral li looral,' now and then. Stavert, who never let himself be put out by trifles, was holding forth composedly to us all on the peculiarities of a new American rifle he had been trying, when suddenly, and with a greater shock than any mere noise could have caused, utter, breathless silence fell upon us all. cannot explain it to you, the startling, sickening sensation of that instantaneous hushed pause, without warning, without We looked blankly in one another's faces for a second; but nobody

"Then past the open windows, between us and the quiet night sky, there seemed to sweep a rush of chill air, and on it was borne the sound of a voice, a wild, mournful shriek, which rose higher and higher and wilder and wilder, till it thrilled through the room we sat in and then passed on, dying away into a faint echo in the stillness.

"'The—the wind in the tree-tops,' some one stammered out at length; and then all broke out at once: 'It came up from the sea.' 'An echo from the hill-side." 'No. A voice—a woman's.' Only Larry, who had stopped open-mouthed in the middle of a chorus, was silent. His face was ghastly white, his eyes staring. He shook his head and tried to speak—but his voice failed him, and went off into an incoherent murmur of 'the Saints be between us and Evil,' as I caught it, and I'm sure I saw him cross himself.

"'Did you see anything? Speak out, Larry,' half-a-dozen of us demanded at once. 'Do you know what it was?'

"'Faith, then, I do know her? Though why she should come to us here. Not one of them amongst you! Not a single O'Beirne—' but the well-known name coming in here, in the midst of his panic, struck upon our ears with such irresistibly comic effect that a shout of laughter interrupted him. We all joined in, in the sheer revulsion of feeling, boisterously and long. Even Stavert smiled an acid little smile.

"'What was it?' I asked him presently. We had all got into the way of referring to him on occasion as a supreme authority on vexed questions. "'How the deuce should I know?' he spoke more roughly than usual, perhaps, because he had really been disturbed. 'How should I pretend to recognise the voice of every dog of the twenty or thirty in barracks?'

"'It wasn't a dog. No dog ever gave a cry like that."

"He got up and pushed his way round to the door. 'Here, Monk!' he shouted, 'What do you mean by it? Come in!' and in slouched his great St. Bernard, with his head dropped between his shoulders and his tail drooped, looking sideways and askance at us all. Stavert gave him a kick and sent him into a corner, and came back to his seat, and went on as if he had never been interrupted. Then the others began again, but not easily, stopping and listening at the slightest sound. All at once the great hound lifted his head and gave a piteous whimper, and there was a general silence. Stavert laughed triumphantly, but broke off short, for there again and again-not from earth or heaven, but floating in the night sky over us—came the cry, a long-drawn, sobbing, shuddering wail, of no mortal lips, filled with more than mortal agony. Not a man of us could stir or speak till the last whisper had died away.'

The General made an exasperating pause here to rekindle his cigar. We were none of usprepared with any comment on the narration: only O'Beirne drew nearer and looked up with a curious awakened face and a deeper frown.

"We were evidently not the only ones to hear it, either. We crowded to the windows and looked out. There were voices of men heard, and dark figures I hurried moving about the square. downstairs and out without further delay, and ran against my own servant first thing. He hadn't much enlightenment 'Something was up' in the to offer. men's quarters, he opined. 'What sort of something?' Nothing was to be got out of him or any of the others I met, and I went back. Larry was still sitting staring, whiter, if possible, than before, and doggedly unresponsive. 'It's a warning, I've told ye. Best leave it to those it's meant for,' was the burden of his replies till he saw me, when he beckoned, saying: 'You heard it, Stafford, didn't you? And you'll believe me if I tell you what it means, and who it's sent Not an O'Beirne, here, but myself, he said, with a sort of woebegone pride.

"'Why, what do you think it is, Larry ?'

I asked, bewildered.

whisper, 'and who'd she be keening for except myself?' The great strong fellow's eyes looked piteous, though he was as brave as the best of us, and everybody 'There'll be round felt uncomfortable. a funeral, here-but it won't be the Red Book you'll be burying.

"'Who do you mean by "she"? and what's she got to do with you or your

funeral ?' Stavert said.

"The Banshee. Didn't you see her With her just now as she passed? long trailing shroud-just as I saw her myself when I was a slip of a boy out on the mountain above Kilcorrig at night. Once I heard the cry, and twice, and the third time I saw her come sweeping past on the wind, with her long, white hair floating behind her, and her hand raised, pointing over Kilcorrig Tower, and melting away in the moonshine. Next news we heard was that young Phil O'Beirne-all the heir that was left to the family thenhad been shot at the Alma.'

"You can fancy all the discussion that followed, and how neither chaff nor argument could drive poor Larry from the conviction that his time was up. Not a man amongst us was of sufficient importance to possess a Banshee of his own. Not another direct or indirect descendant of the Irish Kings was to be found in Hythe at that date. It was Larry's doom, and he stuck to the distinction in a gloomily-elevated

sort of way."

O'Beirne leant forward suddenly.

"Do you mind giving me the date of all

"Somewhere near the end of the Course. I can't calculate to a day-in the November of '57. If you'll hear me out you'll find that the story doesn't concern you or any other O'Beirne, alive or dead," the General replied testily.

"We all hung about, uncertain what further to expect. Stavert muttered something about not waiting for the third act of the farce, and suggested that I should come and have a cigar in his room and look at the rifle. I didn't care to be outdone in indifference, and we got away.

"'What do you really think of all this?" asked him when we got outside, from force of habit, expecting an explanation

forthwith.

"'I don't know. I wish I did. Come

along!' was all he said.

"He looked as white as Larry, and I noticed a queer look in his eyes that makes

"'The Keen,' he said, in an awe-struck; me sometimes wonder whether he was really all right just then, or whether-but that's not the story. We had scarcely got to his room when he clutched my arm and we both stood listening, he gazing at the window, I at him.

"It came again—the long, low, piercing cry, drawing nearer and nearer till the room seemed filled by a burst of wailing that died sobbingly away to deepest silence. Then came an outbreak of voices exclaiming, the sound of steps in the passage

"'Never mind the rifle now. Leave me, that's a good fellow. Don't let them come in here-' Stavert spoke hoarsely and 'And-Stafford, when you go back tell Larry-if it's any comfort to himthat I've seen her!'"

The General laid down the end of his

cigar and emptied his glass.

We waited expectant, but he only drew out his watch and raised his eyebrows at " I'm really the lateness of the hour. ashamed-" he began apologetically.

"Oh, go on! What happened after?"

we demanded.

" Nothing. That's all," was the dis-

concerting rejoinder.

"I can give you no reason or explana-Nothing came of it. I know it is unsatisfactory and irregular to end so, but I can't help it. Larry isn't dead, I need hardly mention. Perhaps we all might have made more of the incident but for a most unfortunate occurrence next day that drove it out of our heads. separated directly after, never all to meet

We felt slightly injured. Our guest made his adieux all round, and prepared to depart. The young Canadian blocked

"I-I am very much interested-personally interested in what you've been telling us," he began rather awkwardly; "but, before we part, there is something more that I should like to have told. Did you ever imagine to yourself any possible explanation? Or would you-could you -have you any objection to telling us what did occur on the next day?"

The General's face clouded.

"Objection ? No; it was no secret. Any of you might have heard of it. It was a painful business that we none of us cared to recall. I and some others were in Stavert's room next day, looking at his It was handed about from one to rifle. another, and nobody had a suspicion that it was loaded. Stavert was explaining some new device in sighting, and raised it, aimed—and fired. An orderly sergeant was crossing the square, and we saw him fall forward, shot through the heart. Stavert was like a madman. We had to keep a watch on him night and day till we got him away from the place. He sent in his papers and went abroad. I've never met him since. He was called to the Bar sometime after I heard, and is getting on very well—a Q.C. I suppose by this time."

"And the man who was killed?"

"Poor Matthewson. A very good man—one of the school sergeants. He was luckily a widower, with only one son, and he was in America, or somewhere. Stavert wanted to do all manner of things for him, if he could have found him, but he couldn't; and so there it ended."

O'Beirne stood up before us all like a martyr nerving himself for a confession of

faith.

"I don't know how I can ask you to believe what I am going to tell you. give you my word that I never heard the story of the Banshee till this evening, but I know it to be true. I'll tell you why. My father was a Canadian O'Beirne. There has been a long lawsuit about his claims to the Irish property, only just decided in our favour. My father has succeeded as heir to his father, the only son of Matthew O'Beirne of Kilcorrig. He ran away from home when a young lad, and the family sought him in vain for years. It was proved at last that he had enlisted under a false name in a line regiment, distinguished himself more than once in action, and had married and left one son-my father." O'Beirne stopped for a minute, and then went on, with a desperate effort. "He got an appointment at Hythe, and, in 1857, was killed here by accident, and lies buried in the churchyard yonder, under the name of Matthew Matthewson. That's all. Good evening."

He turned round sharply, and looking neither to right nor left, strode away from

amongst us.

"I didn't want to say anything uncivil to your friend," observed the General to me, as we walked home together; "but I should take him to be a young man of vivid imagination. Do you mean to tell me that any of you believed that wonderful bit of family history of his?"

"As implicitly as we believed in your story," I replied with conviction.

LONG TOMMIE'S BARGAIN.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of " At the Stores," " A Knot Cut," etc. etc.

CHAPTER I.

Long Tommie had done an exceedingly neat stroke of business, and was chuckling over it now as he lay on his back, stretched out full length on the ground, under the shade of the cluster of pines which sheltered his abode in Marsh Flat. He had chuckled a good deal over his bargain, and he chuckled over it, now and again, between spells of the placid slumber inspired partly by the intense midday heat of a Californian summer, and partly by the calm contentment of a man who has done well by himself.

He even roused himself enough from one drowsy dream of future bliss, to express a

conviction aloud.

"Jehoshaphat! What a darned fool that blessed Doctor is, to be sure!" and then he swore gently, as the battered hat shading his eyes slipped aside, through the energy displayed in the expression of that conviction, and exposed his upturned face to the blazing heat and light. He replaced it in its former position, carefully arranging it—for he was extremely methodical of habit-so that the ruins of a once mighty brim did not interfere with the pipe in his mouth, and then he continued his dreams and meditations under its shade. He had been lying there since midday, and showed no signs of bringing his peaceful siesta to a There was no hurry. He could enjoy the leisure and proud consciousness of a man who has a banker's account.

The heat was certainly intense. It hovered in wavering lines of haze over the settlement of Marsh Flat. The sun poured down its waves of scorching light, exposing the hideous ditches, and yawning fissures, where men with spade and pickaxe had ruthlessly torn at the earth to wrest her treasure from her keeping. But the earth had baffled them, and the men, heart-sickened and disappointed, were gradually drifting off, to find luck and fortune in other places.

But the traces of their occupation still lingered to disfigure the earth's beauty in these ugly ditches, in the cabins already fast falling into ruins, and in all the lumber and litter of timber and refuse heaps. While here and there a derrick still stood upright black and stark, like the tombstones of the departed men's dead golden hopes. It was a scene of desolation and ugliness. There was scarcely a sign of any human presence, save that of this man, sleepily enjoying his virtuous repose. But there were still a few other inhabitants. Some lately washed clothes hanging motionless in the hot, still air, from a line outside one or two of the cabins, showed that there were still left some to perform this elementary duty of civilisation, while from a cabin close to Long Tommie's, a shrill crying, as of some child in sharp pain, rose and fell at intervals on the hazy silence of the summer day.

This fitful wailing caused Long Tommie some discomfort, for he muttered an exclamation curiously compounded—a mixture of an oath and an expression of pity. though there were other inhabitants at the moment in Marsh Flat besides Long Tommie, most of them were taking it as easily -as far as work was concerned-as Long Tommie himself. Their state of mind, however, was different. They were sullen, dogged, savage, drunk, according to their various temperaments. They had not succeeded in selling their claims and stock in trade, for exactly four times the amount laid out They would all have to leave upon them. the place sooner or later, but not with the consolation of a balance at their banker's. Long Tommie, through the dexterity of a friend who had acted as his agent in a distant town, had satisfactorily disposed of his interest in the doomed settlement to a doctor, who was apparently anxious to change his profession for the more speculating one of striking oil. negotiations had been most satisfactorily carried through, the Doctor trusting implicitly to the honour of the agent, Long Tommie's friend.

Whatever means he had taken, he had succeeded in impressing upon that simpleminded Doctor that he was the very soul of rectitude, and that his friend Mr. Thomas Cotton's claim at Marsh Flat was the most certain road to fortune. delicate negotiations concluded, nothing now remained for Mr. Thomas Cotton but to gather up the few odds and ends left to him after a most disastrous year of possession, and to depart from his late claim at Marsh Flat. It will be seen that, for obvious reasons, it was advisable for him to be some distance from the spot when the new owner entered on the scene. This Dr. Edge was a "darned fool," but he

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probably possessed a derringer, and might be a fair all-round shot. Long Tommie, in spite of his own advantages, was quite reasonable enough to see that the situation of a meeting between the incoming and outgoing tenant might be a little awkward. From information received from his valuable friend, who had most forcibly advised him to "make tracks," the new owner was already on his way to take possession. But he could not arrive immediately, for it was a long journey; and in the meantime Long Tommie could rest, and recover from the strain of the bargain, for the anxiety had naturally been great, and calmly consider his plans for the future.

The long, hot hours stole away; and, as the sun sank towards the west, long bars of black shadows, cast by Long Tommie's pines, stretched themselves out from the earth where he lay, towards that distant eastern town, like weird, warning fingers, pointing in mockery to the way by which that confiding Doctor was coming, all unconscious of the ruin that was awaiting him.

But Long Tommie was neither poetical The shadows only told nor sentimental. him that it was getting cooler, and after a lazy grunt, and two or three languid yawns, he sat up and tilted back the hat from his eyes. Taking him on the whole, he was not a bad-looking specimen of humanity. He had good features and a handsome pair He was, indeed, rather of blue eyes. remarkable-looking, owing to his height and thinness. They were both unusual; and as he slowly now stumbled to his feet, languidly stretching himself, the effect was almost alarming, giving, as it did, the impression that, if he stretched himself much more, he would inevitably snap in half.

But he accomplished the operation in safety, and then proceeded to prepare a meal for himself. After finishing this, he lighted a pipe and sauntered down to the shanty, where lived the sick child—the last child left at Marsh Flat. The mother was sitting in the little clearing about the cabin, dignified by the name of garden, having brought the child out to enjoy the growing coolness of the air. She was sitting with it in her arms, rocking it to and fro, and crooning over it some old English cradle song, which sounded strangely pathetic in the sights and surroundings of that far - off Californian home. Long Tommie sauntered up to her, and taking the pipe from his mouth, looked down at the child in her arms. It was a boy of about seven, small for his age, and

looking still smaller from the terrible waste of the illness. He was a mere skeleton. He was half asleep now, the poor little pinched face lying with closed eyes on the mother's breast. His whiteness and stillness, contrasting with his almost ethereal beauty of feature, touched the man's heart with a chill.

"How's Sammie to-day?" he asked,

awkwardly.

"But sadly." She lifted her weary, hopeless eyes to him, speaking with the broad North-country accent, which she had never lost. It was all that was left to her of the old life in that quiet far-off English village which she had left to follow her husband in his search for fortune. She had been a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, hopeful girl; smart in her dress, and neat in her habits. She was, to-day, a sallow, hopeless, slovenly drudge. "It's the air of this hateful place, an' nout elz. childt was ailin when we come; but Jacob wouldn't listen, and now the childt shrikes most all day an' night with the fever an' pain, an' he's growin' weaker every day."

The words ended in a whisper, and her eyes fell to the child she held gathered to

her bosom.

"It's nobbut Jacob as 'll have done it! An' he willn't listen!" she cried passionately again. "He's mad gone on the claim. I've prayed him on my bended knees to take us away; but he says as how he's worn all his money on the place, and must bide, an' that there's money here yet. As if any money can make up for the sin of lettin' his childt die !" and she fell to crying, but silently, lest the child should hear.

Long Tommie looked away, the distant setting sun becoming for a second a blurred mass of lurid fire, while his lips formed an

unspoken imprecation.

Jacob's story was well known. He had invested his all in a claim at Marsh Flat. at which he had worked at first hopefully. then doggedly, then desperately, now madly, for the boys believed that his efforts were prompted by insanity. His brain had been turned by his ill-luck, and he stuck on, sullen, dogged, desperate, while all the other men were leaving fast, and his child was slowly dying.

A desperate resolve came into Long Tommie's brain, to go and take Jacob by the throat, and kick him out there and

then from Marsh Flat.

The boys would long ago have subscribed

away themselves, and support them in some more salubrious spot and climate; but their own fortunes were at far too low an ebb to carry out their charitable inten-

"He kinder wants a Frisco doctor an' a kerridge to drive around in, an' champagne by the bucketful," was the general opinion.

Long Tommie now suddenly remembered his bargain, and the sum lying to his account

at the bank.

"That's the funeral!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "We'll cure him yet."

The woman looked up startled. Then her face flushed with a sudden passion of

gratitude.

"I don't know as how I should have done without your kindness," she ex-"You an' the boys have been claimed. real good to me an' Sammie. glad for your sake that you're leaving; but oh! it 'll make it bitter an' hard fur us 1"

Long Tommie was so disturbed by this unexpected and confusing outburst of feeling, that he turned and walked hastily

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT is to be done?"

If the "being done" had consisted of the cutting off the head of a fiery dragon, or entering upon single-handed conflict with twenty giants, the men clustered about her would have cheerfully rushed off, there and then, to perform the same. But the fact was that there was nothing to be done.

The train which had deposited them on the platform of a just-opened little Western station was already steaming on its way South, and the stage which was to take the deposited passengers on to Marsh Flat had left some hours before. The train, which ought to have caught it, had been delayed, for the line was not yet in full working

The stage only left Jeanville once a week; and there the two passengers who had just alighted at this still half finished station were stranded. One of them-a delicate looking young man of about twenty-one - was sitting, faint and exhausted from a long journey through the intense heat, on some barrels. The other had gradually gathered about her, as a light draws the dazzled, distracted moths, something to send the mother and child all the men who had been lounging about

the depôt, railway men, cow-boys who had ridden in from distant ranches to meet goods brought by the train, citizens of Jeanville a trifle unwashed, but with a keen eye to a woman's beauty and a chivalrous desire to serve her.

She stood facing them, the tears in her eyes, her lips trembling. They all felt an insane desire to hit some one as they looked at her; and probably the driver of the departed stage would have come in for a little of their superfluous feeling if he had been there.

"We must get on somehow," the young man on the barrel spoke in a fretful, imperious tone. "You can't stay in this place. A man on the cars told me Jeanville was a beastly hole."

"It's you I am thinking of! We must get to Marsh Flat," appealing to the men again. "He's not strong, and its healthy climate——"

A most curious look crossed the men's faces; most of them had heard of Marsh Flat. One or two had seen it.

A few imprecations, spoken under the breath, out of consideration for her, was the only expressed answer to her panegyric. They caught the ear of the young man on the barrel

"It's a jolly sight better place than this, I hope," he said with a gay laugh. "It was described as a paradise—that's why we've come." A movement in the rear of the crowd was hailed by the men as a heaven-sent relief. They all hastily turned their faces away from the two passengers to Marsh Flat, and looked round. Above their heads and shoulders was seen the head of the new-comer. It was greeted with effusive cheerfulness.

"Hyar's Long Tommie!" exclaimed one of the cow-boys, turning back to the young lady. "He hails from Marsh Flat hisself, an' I reckon ez how he'll give you all the information you may require. Stir your stumps, Long Tommie, an' come along!"

Long Tommie suddenly found himself, under the force of general pressure, in the front row, face to face with the girl who wanted to know about Marsh Flat. For a second she gazed up at him speechless—he was so very tall and thin. Then she reached his eyes, and thought them beautiful, and, at the same second, remembered Marsh Flat.

"I want to go on to Marsh Flat at once," she said, with the imperious calmness of a Queen. "They tell me you come

from there, and can give me some information."

He did not answer. Instead, he stood staring at her, pale, and breathless, as if she were mad.

She thought he was, or at least that he was very impertinent.

"If you can help us, I shall be much obliged," she said frigidly. "I am Dr. Edge, of Carlston."

"Dr. Edge, of Carlston!"

Long Tommie stumbled back, nearly knocking over the man just behind, clutching at his derringer, with one mad, wild thought in which himself and his agent were inextricably confused. But, before the startled girl had quite taken in his extraordinary behaviour, she had forgotten him, and Marsh Flat, and everything else.

"Don't be frightened, Angel!" exclaimed the young man on the barrel, trying to laugh. "But I feel just a little——"

With a wild cry of pain and fear she sprang to his side, but, before she could support him, he had slipped from the barrel and lay in a dead faint on the ground. Long Tommie, in spite of his height, was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER III.

"ANGEL! Do you think Mr. Cotton

Max Edge stood leaning against the doorway of Mr. Thomas Cotton's late home, gazing down at the straggling settlement of Marsh Flat, lying in its dip of the hills. He had been standing there gazing in silence for the last half-hour, with a variety of expressions chasing each other in his eyes.

The Doctor sat a few yards from him, on the fallen trunk of a tree. She, too, had been silent during that half hour; but there was no variety of expression on her face. It was set, white, with eyes strangely brilliant and very hard. At her brother's question she stirred slightly, or, rather, it seemed as if an irrepressible shudder ran through her from head to foot. For that question awoke an echo in her own heart, and that shudder was its answer. Something within her had been asking that question ever since they had arrived at Marsh Flat a fortnight before—a question which some other part of her ruthlessly forced into silence; but a question which had grown louder and louder every day since their arrival at Marsh Flat.

"It seems so strange," went on Max in a

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troubled manner. "It isn't like him as we have known him-as he helped you nurse me at Jeanville." That fainting fit had culminated in illness which had laid Max Edge up for nearly three weeks at Jeanville. "Nor can I reconcile it with the trouble he took to bring us here himself when we lost the stage that second time; nor with the way he has served and helped us since we came here, thinking of your comfort in every way." The Doctor's beautiful face grew paler and harder. "I know, too, that he spends nights and days prospecting around to see if that poor crazy old Jacob is right after all, when he still swears there is money in the place; and yet it seems impossible that he did not know how horribly that man in Carlston cheated and ruined us! Oh, Angel! it's only for you I think. You came here to please a whim of mine. I can't bear to see you in this hateful, Godforsaken spot, with your profession you were so proud of wasted. If I thought that he-

She rose hastily from the tree, checking him with a sharp gesture. Then she broke into a hard, hysterical little laugh.

" It is amusing. How we talked of the practice I was to work up in this 'rising settlement,' where a doctor 'was so much needed,' and there-

She stretched out her hand towards the township of Marsh Flat, lying hideous, desolate, deserted, under the gathering shadows of the dying day. There was not even the sick child for her to tend ; Long Tommie, the very next day after that talk with Mrs. Bud, having carried them off to a distant and more salubrious spot, maintaining them in luxury at his own cost out of the money in the bank.

It was difficult to say why anyone remained at all. Jacob Bud's mania accounted for him. The two new-comers on Long Tommie's late claim excited a great deal of curiosity and interest. The men were pretty well satisfied that there was a big swindle somewhere. But their curiosity was never gratified.

Dr. Edge and her brother preserved a strict silence on the subject of their late transactions with Long Tommie's agent. Long Tommie's staying behind was also a constant wonder. The boys began to whisper that he had been infected with Night and day, he Jacob Bud's craze. might have been met prowling the country for miles round the settlement. But he was rarely seen by anyone; never by the Edges themselves. Yet they felt his

presence constantly, in some attempted alleviation of the miserable position in which they found themselves. He seemed to have a sense of their wants before they were even breathed to each other, and in some unexpected and delicate fashion the want would be fulfilled.

He was like some devoted invisible genie. He had even, during those three weeks when he had helped to nurse Max at Jeanville, at the cost of incredible exertion, made several journeys to the house at Marsh Flat, and had so beautified it for her presence as to arouse among the surviving members of the community many ironical remarks on the wealth and quality of "the Doctor." But these remarks were strictly private, for Long Tommie was known to be of a hasty disposition.

The first sight of Marsh Flat, as they drove into it, awoke the Doctor's suspicions, already a little excited by the reticence of the inhabitants of Jeanville, when, during her brother's illness, she had occasionally questioned them as to their new home. One glance into Mr. Thomas Cotton's face, as he drove silently by her side, confirmed every doubt, and a look came then into her own eyes, which had never left them. It was the first time in her life that she had come face to face with treachery.

As she looked at her brother now, as he leant wearily against the door, that expression changed. She saw for the first time how the disappointment had told on him. It was only to get him away from the close confinement of the office life which had seemed to try him, that she had come here. He had never been really ill, till that strange faintness and illness at Jeanville. But this afternoon, it seemed to her as if some terrible delicacy had suddenly touched him. The journey to Marsh Flat, delightful as it had been, had quite set him up after that illness; but to day he looked as if Death had drawn very near again. She had heard of Jacob's child. Her eyes blazed into a light, cruel and fierce. She thought of Long Tommie. If anything happened to this brother of hers, she would shoot the swindler with her own hand.

She walked away, turning her back on Marsh Flat, thinking of the traitor who had brought them there. She thrust from her all the glamour of his chivalrous service, of the touching humility of his bearing, of the tender care with which he had surrounded her and Max during those three long anxious weeks at Jeanville.

She smiled in bitter mockery at the

undercurrent of agony and shame which had underlain all his bearing towards them, of which she had been always vaguely conscious, and which had so puzzled her,

till they arrived at Marsh Flat.

It had been reflected in his eyes all through those three days when, by easy stages, he had brought them to Marsh Flat, a drive which must have been one slow, prolonged torture to him if he had a heart, knowing as he did that each step brought them nearer to the bitter awaken-And he had a heart! She, as a woman, had already discovered that, she had no pity for him! She was glad that he had suffered. Every feeling in her heart raged against him. And if these were not a sufficient array against him, there was always the miserable mortification of human nature at having been so completely duped.

She had been very proud before she came here, proud of her intellectual successes, believing that the world lay at her feet, and that in her profession she would become famous. And lo! on its very threshold, she had been defrauded, cheated, by

two unscrupulous adventurers.

She walked on and on, not caring that the night had fallen, and that its peace of silver distant stars and unfathomable darkness of blue sky had touched even the hideousness of Marsh Flat. The shadows had grown so thick, that she did not notice one that dogged her steps. But as she leant back suddenly exhausted, mentally and physically, against one of the redwoods, feeling for the first time how far she had gone, the shadow glided out from behind a bush she had just passed, and stood before her. It was Long Tommie.

It was the first time they had met since he had parted with her on the threshold of her new home. Even in the starlight, she saw how changed he was. He looked like some haggard, dishevelled scarecrow. His beauty had gone; his sunk, haggard eyes would no longer awake an answering smile on a

woman's lips.

"I've wanted to speak," he said, with an unconscious effort, recalling the old education and language of his boyhood. "But I never saw how it was to be done, till I saw you coming this way to-night, and I thought by this light I shouldn't see your eyes so plainly. I can't give you back that money, because I've spent most of it. I had spent it before I met you. I don't ask you to forgive me. You couldn't. But I thought how I should like to tell

you that I will never rest night or day till

I've given you your own again."

She was trembling from head to foot, but her eyes had no pity in them. She was conscious of nothing, save her knowledge of his treachery. She stretched out her hand to motion him out of her sight.

"And if my brother dies, I will hate you with an undying hatred. I hate you now! Let me pass, and never look me in the face again, lest I forget that I am a woman!"

He stood stiff, still, staring after her till she vanished, a swift, slender shadow,

into the dusk of the night.

The silence was suddenly broken by a low, chuckling laugh, ugly to hear, for the lack of some human note in it, and a gaunt figure broke its way through the thick undergrowth behind him, and clutched him by the arm.

"There's money, I tell you! I'm just touching it; and then—— But who were you speakin' to?" with a savage change in the chuckling tone. "One of them darned newcomers? If you let out to them, I'll

put a bullet--"

But with a fierce imprecation, Long Tommie flung his mad fellow-miner aside, and dashed away into the darkness.

Jacob made a savage rush after him, then stopped, his sick brain remembering

something.

"It warn't Long Tommie," he said in a troubled way. "He's game, an' wouldn't go fur to split on my luck. It's those darned newcomers!" and he gazed the way by which the Doctor had gone, a malevolent look of hate and fear distiguring his face.

He felt his six-shooter, and smiled quite cheerfully. Then he returned to his claim to continue his boring, tortured night and day by the demon Hope, which had entered into his brain, scourging him with its cruel mocking fancies, and driving him on to his

Unfortunately, another idea, which had vaguely formed itself in his mind when the Doctor first arrived in Marsh Flat, had been gradually gaining strength and shape, owing perhaps to the rough, though not unkindly meant chaff of the boys, amusing themselves at the expense of his mad belief that there were oil springs yet in Marsh Flat. They had jested about the newcomers, and told him they had come to share the fabulous fortune he was so rapidly making. This idea went back with him to-night to his claim, and, as the days went on, grew as fixed in his mind as

that belief that the money he had sunk at Marsh Flat was to be speedily returned to him a hundredfold,

CHAPTER IV.

IT was two months later. The fierce heats of the summer days were dying before the pale chill mists of the autumn. But the change of seasons brought no change in the affairs of Marsh Flat, except that perhaps they looked more hopeless, and Marsh Flat itself more dreary, as the sun-god withdrew the light of his golden glory from them. Jacob Bud still pursued his phantom fortune. But the men noticed a change in him. The old sullenness, which used to alternate with fits of childish cheerfulness, had given place to a suppressed irritation of manner, which would break out at moments into fierce rage and excitement, and gradually the boys left off Long Tommie-to the chaffing him. general regret, for he was popular-had disappeared entirely. No one had ever seen him since he had met the Doctor that night in the wood. What the Doctor thought of it, no one could tell; only at the end of the two months she seemed to have lost much of her beauty, and though every man in Marsh Flat was ever on the look-out to do her a service if it were needed, and would willingly have had any illness under the sun, if by so doing they could have added to her income, they had fallen into the habit of taking a wide round if they saw her coming, and never ventured to address her, unless she smiled at them first.

"It makes a man kinder skeared to meet her when she looks so cold and straight," said one man, expressing the general opinion of the community. As for Max, some of Jacob's craze seemed to have fallen on him, and he was cheerful and hopeful, in a fitful, excited fashion, which was all the more unendurable to his sister, contrasted as it was by the miserable despondency into which he would at times fall, when the conviction forced itself even on him that nothing was to be taken out of Marsh Flat.

One evening as he sat smoking alone before their shanty door—the Doctor having gone off on one of the long solitary walks which she often took now, being absent for hours together—Long Tommie appeared suddenly before him, creeping round from the back of the shanty as if a fraid of his footfall being heard. More

sprang to his feet, his face ablaze with rage. During these two months, he too had come to a conclusion on the matter of Long Tommie's bargain, and had been desiring very anxiously to meet him again. But something in Long Tommie's appearance checked his intention of forcibly questioning the ethics of that late transaction. His face was deadly white, his eyes glowing like coals of fire, and he clutched in one hand a bundle of something that looked like papers, which he thrust straight out at Max, with a hand that trembled like a frightened schoolgirl's.

"Jacob was right," he said in a thick low tone, full of the most painful excitement. "The money's there fast enough. I found out; I hunted day and night for it. I reckon if I hadn't found it soon, I should have put a bullet in my brain. But I went on — and it's there — there!" he flourished the papers. "I didn't dare come sooner. I've been waiting all day till she went. She said I was never to look on her face again. She'll be rich—every penny I stole from her she'll get back a hundred times; and if my life..."

He turned sharply. Even in the midst of his terrible excitement, his quick ear had caught a sound. The Doctor had passed round the side of the shanty, and seeing him there, before the door, had stopped short a few yards from them, gazing at him through the thick gathering shadows of the autumn evening.

But someone else had been stealthily creeping towards the shanty, and now stood crouching behind one of the redwoods under which Long Tommie had chuckled that summer afternoon over his bargain.

For a second the Doctor and Long Tommie looked straight in each other's eyes. Then a curious inarticulate sound broke from his lips, the choking of a man's cry of agony and despair, and his eyes looked away from her face, on to the pines beyond.

The next second he had sprung forward, caught her in his arms, and almost flung her aside, as from behind the pine on which his eyes had faller, there flashed out a red tongue of flame. It was followed by a quick, sharp report, and then Long Tommie had paid for his bargain.

absent for hours together—Long Tommie appeared suddenly before him, creeping round from the back of the shanty as if afraid of his footfall being heard. Max thrust on one side—she saw the man she

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had sworn to hate with an undying hatred | lying motionless on the ground.

He had received the bullet meant for her. She and Max ran to his side; but she was first.

"Oh, Heaven grant that he is not dead !"

And the sobbing prayer broke from the Doctor's lips, and it was the Doctor's tears that fell thick and fast a little later over

But then she was a woman, and nothing if not inconsistent.

It was not till the next morning that the dastardly would-be murderer of an innocent woman was settled without doubt to be Jacob. The boys, the very instant the news of the affair reached them, turned out of Marsh Flat in full force, with one very business-like, though unspoken, determination to lynch the would-be assassin the moment they found him.

But when they did find him he had gone to be judged by a different judgement to He lay at the foot of a ravine, down which he had fallen as he rushed in mad haste from the scene of the tragedy, neither of the two kneeling by the silent figure on the ground, ever thinking for a moment of his existence.

So poor, crazy Jacob found rest from his weary toiling, and the earth gave him up at last one of her treasures : that of a peaceful sleeping-place, into which no feverish mocking dreams of gold could

But he had been right after all. There was wealth about Marsh Flat, and Long Tommie had found it. In his passionate desire to expiate that bargain, he had perhaps been touched by poor Jacob's belief too, clinging to it as a drowning man clings to a straw. He had searched far and near, always keeping some faith in his former knowledge of Jacob as a shrewd, clever man, and he had been rewarded. There was oil not so very far even from the present settlement. When the discovery was made, he acted at once upon it. The ground was bought in the Doctor's name, and not till he could place the papers in her brother's hand did he divulge the secret of his two months' disappearance and silence.

There are only two more remarks to make. Long Tommie did not die, though everybody, as well as himself, is convinced

other is, that the Doctor did make a comfortable fortune, and gave up her profession, because of other duties. Perhaps it ought also to be added, that poor Jacob's little sickly child is now a strong, healthy boy, and that two people at least always smile when they look at him and think of a certain bargain, and the thought is generally followed by a kiss.

IN THE HAYFIELD. BY HARRIETT STOCKALL.

What, weary of thy rustic toil.
My brown-eyed, bonny maid?
Well, prithee, put the rake away,
Let lads and lasses turn the hay; Sit thou with me beyond the ken Of buxom maids and harvest-men, Beneath the beechen shade.

See how the burnished branches droop About us like a bower Ah! give me, dear, this hour apart, Look up, and let me read thine heart, Look up, and let me see thine eyes Brimful of maidenly surprise, And blue as love's own flower.

Give me thy fragile hand to hold, The hand that raked the hay; It must be mine, my very own, Not for this hour, this day alone, But all through life while life shall last, And after life when love hath past To regions far away.

Cling close and closer to my breast, God meant it for thy shield; He meant that I, the man, should bear The long day's burden for my share; But oh! He meant that thou shouldst be Solace and comforter to me In life's wide working-field!

RICHARD PALGRAVE'S PARTNERSHIP.

By H. F. ABELL.

CHAPTER I.

In the eyes of the world Nathaniel Palgrave, of King's Court, in the county of Kent, was a man to be envied. By a singular succession of lucky strokes, aided by a natural keenness and shrewdness which uncharitable and envious people called "sharp practice," he had amassed a considerable fortune by the time he had reached that age at which more ordinary or less lucky men are still groaning in harness, and had promptly retired from the arena of active commercial life, to the enjoyment of life as a country gentleman.

Yet Nathaniel Palgrave was not a happy that but for the Doctor's skill and devotion man in spite of his beautiful house, his he would never have pulled through. The pictures, his wine, his farms, and his showgardens; and the two thorns which persistently obtruded themselves through his bed of roses were, first, the want of children, and second, the existence of a brother Richard.

The result of the want was that, in spite of the presence of the best and sweetest and gentlest of wives, in spite of constant relays of guests at the Court, the fine old house with its luxury and comforts, unlightened by the joyous atmosphere of child-life, oppressed Palgrave like a magnificent mausoleum, and he grew irritable, fidgety, obstinate, and peevish.

All this was aggravated by the sudden reappearance in England of his brother Richard.

Twenty years before, he and Richard had gone together into partnership. Richard, the younger, being a clever fellow, had promised well; but he was weak, and, easily led away into idle and thriftless habits, had made a fatal slip in his bookkeeping, and had only saved himself from ignominious public exposure as a felon by flight to Australia, in which country he had rapidly descended to the level of a lounger around saloon bars.

For more than a dozen years Nathaniel Palgrave had heard nothing of Richard. A few weeks before the date of our story, however, he had suddenly reappeared in London, almost in rags, utterly destitute, married, and with a child, to waylay his brother outside the latter's West End club, and to beg assistance.

The assistance had been promptly refused by the high-minded and hard-hearted elder brother; but Richard Palgrave was in London, and this was sufficient to unhinge Nathaniel altogether.

To manage obstinate, prevish, and wilful Nathaniel Palgrave, needed much tact; and it was only after an experience of ten years of married life that Joan Palgrave had contrived, as she imagined, to make herself mistress of this priceless art. But when, one peerless July afternoon, as Nathaniel Palgrave was enjoying a siesta in his garden hammock after a morning in London, she thought an opportunity was offered her of pressing anew a long and unsuccessfully urged suit upon him, she made a great mistake.

"Nathaniel," she said, seating herself with her work beneath the shade of one of the trees to which the hammock of her lord and master was suspended, "I've come to ask you a favour."

"Yes? What is it? I'm not much in

a mood for granting favours; but let's have it."

"It's about the poor London children coming down to our village."

Her husband's handsome face darkened, as he replied:

"You've bothered me about this until I begin to hate the mention of London children. Ever since the parson at Hopton told you that he had started the notion of flooding his neighbourhood with ragged little beggars from the slums of East London, you've been at me to imitate his example here. Once for all, Joan, I don't believe in it. I call it false philanthropy; it makes them discontented with the state of life to which they are called, and it corrupts the morals of our own people, who, Heaven knows, don't need much incentive to be corrupted."

"I think you are hard, my dear," urged Mrs. Palgrave. "We have no children of our own; and I am sure that if it lies in our power to lighten the dark lives of others, we ought to do so."

"What's the use of it?" retorted her "A fortnight in the country husband. isn't long enough to produce tangible benefits upon children who live during the other fifty weeks in slums and alleys; and it's just long enough to spread all sorts of moral and bodily disease amongst our No, no. We are quite near villagers. enough to metropolitan influences as it is, and our people can reach them easily enough without our putting ourselves out of the way to bring the influences to them. Thanks to the pains taken by my brother magistrates and myself, the place is tolerably moral as places go in these days; but to let loose upon it scores of keenwitted little cockneys, reeking with the crime and filth of Lendon, would be the first step towards undoing all the good

Nathaniel Palgrave spoke like a moralist; but moral reasons entered very insignificantly into his motives for rejecting his wife's darling plan of affording pleasure and recreation to the little London outcasts. He was a hard man, and cared for little but his own aggrandisement, and now that he was Squire, and J.P., he considered the administration of benefits to a class with whom he had no sympathy very derogatory to that position which Addison considered to be next the gods. Mrs. Palgrave sighed with the resignation of one who knew that further continuance of the subject at that moment

could be productive of no good; and her husband, after a pause, said:

"That fellow Richard has turned up."
"You mean your poor brother from

Australia."

"Poor brother!" exclaimed her husband, almost fiercely. "A worthless vagabond, who threw away as good a chance in life as ever was offered to a man, and who is no better than a common felon! Poor, indeed! Really, Joan, you are getting quite absurd with your notions of universal philanthropy."

"Every man is liable to make a blunder,

Nat."

"Yes, and every blunder has to be paid for in meal or in malt."

"What did he want?"

"Why money, of course. Had some tale at his tongue's end about a wife and child, and starvation, and the workhouse, and the usual beggar patter. But I very soon shut him up, I can tell you."

"I am very sorry for him."

"Of course you are—that's you all over. And he's had the impudence to call his child Joan, after you. As if a man who can't keep himself decently had a right to go and marry, and become a father, and think that by christening his child after his brother's wife he can establish a sort

of claim to help."

Mrs. Palgrave said no more, but resumed her work in silence, whilst the great man in the hammock above her puffed his indignation out amongst the green-clad branches in great clouds of tobacco-smoke. She had in her composition a good deal of that quiet, dogged resolution which is so often found allied with docile and peaceloving natures. And as she sat there, amidst the humming of the insects and the gentle fluttering of the leaves, she determined that she would go to work in her own quiet, unobtrusive manner, and carry out not only her original scheme of getting the little London waifs and strays down to the village for a summer holiday, but find out the whereabouts of Richard Palgrave, that she would, and help him out of the misfortunes which, if he had brought them on himself, might at any rate have been to some extent mitigated, if not prevented, by the exercise of a little ordinary forbearance and charity on the part of a successful brother.

In a wretched garret in one of those

battered and decayed old Southwark inns, which once were famous coaching-houses, Richard Palgrave had found a temporary home. In consideration of a weekly payment of five shillings, the gently-nurtured, well-educated, and once refined man was enabled to hide himself and his misery from the eyes of the great world struggling and seething outside, to creep out in search of occupation, to creep back again brokenhearted and desperate, whilst Barbara, his wife, did her poor best to keep matters above absolute ruin, and her little Joan free from literal rags, by the constant employment of her needle in the service of Jew slop-tailors.

Only the direst necessity had made him leave Australia for the old country. He had tried every available method of gaining even a decent subsistence. He had with his marriage given up resolutely the listless, loafing habits of life into which he had drifted; but lack of a special training for any sort of work had been fatal to him, and at last he had borrowed his passage-money and had resolved to try the heart of a brother, with whom he had held no com-

munication during fifteen years.

But even upon arrival in London he had waited a month ere he attempted to find out Nathaniel; and during this time had managed, with the aid of poor, faithful,

trusting Barbara, to exist.

Then he fell ill, and Barbara got out of work; and he reluctantly saw that the only course open to him was to discover the brother, from whom he had been so long severed, to appeal to the ties of blood, and to ask for another chance in life. He met Nathaniel outside the Palatial Club, of which the country Squire was a member, told his tale, and was summarily spurned, and bidden to lie on the bed he had made for himself.

When matters are at their worst, if a turn is taken it must be for the better. Thus it was with Richard Palgrave. A few evenings after his meeting with his brother he returned to Barbara, elated and cheerful. By the merest chance he had met an old Australian friend, Thompson by name, who on the strength of past acquaintance had made business propositions to him which promised to open up a bright future. He was not at liberty to divulge the nature of the business; but Thompson himself would call at the Southwark lodging, and Barbara might judge for herself.

The name seemed somehow familiar to

Barbara, but in connection with what she could not recall; nor, when Thompson himself arrived, did she remember ever to have seen him before. He was a big, burly fellow, with a quick, shifting eye, who dressed loudly, and talked slang. He inaugurated his introduction to the Southwark garret by sending down to the inn bar for a bottle of whisky, and at once made himself at home.

"Me and Palgrave, mum," he said, "are old chums. He's down in his luck, I'm up in the world. Therefore it's my duty to heave him a helping hand. But look here, mum. You may reckon it to be a strange thing for a man like me to do, but it's a matter o' business. Your old man here owes me a few hundred dollars."

Barbara looked wonderingly at her husband. The latter nodded his head. Thompson continued.

"It was over Blue Gauntlet for the Melbourne Cup, in Eighty. Very well, I don't want to make you unhappy; but I don't reckon your husband ever intended to pay me those dollars."

"Indeed, Thompson," began Palgrave; but his visitor patted him on the back and winked a command of silence.

"I don't want the dollars," went on Thompson; "but I do want a pardner in my business of good appearance, for my appearance ain't in my favour, is it now? Ha! ha!"

And he laughed till the rickety rafters rattled.

"And so I propose that in payment of his debt to me your husband should join me in a gentlemanly, refined business, which don't need no capital, and which brings in the coin merrily."

What could the poor woman do? They were literally beggars. Her child was moaning on the ragged pallet beside her with pain; every avenue to a livelihood seemed barred to a man without special knowledge of any craft, and whose antecedents were no recommendation. She did not like the look of Thompson; but she had seen enough of life not to be prejudiced by mere appearances, and, after all, he seemed to speak as if he were actuated as much by genuine friendship as by a determination to get the equivalent of money due.

So she thanked her visitor with tears in her eyes, and felt more light in heart than she had felt for long years. Thompson remained, smoking big cigars and drinking whisky until late at night, when he took

his leave, making an appointment with Palgrave to meet him the next day.

Weeks ran on, and Barbara Palgrave regretted that even a momentary suspicion concerning Thompson had ever crossed her mind. Richard never divulged the nature of his new occupation, and all that his wife knew about it was that it necessitated his being well dressed and that it brought him in a regular salary, which raised them to comparative affluence, and enabled them to quit the miserable Southwark garret for a more decent lodging.

Yet there were circumstances which occasionally made her uneasy. Prominent amongst these were her husband's extraordinary reticence concerning his occupation, and the change in his manner. Barbara was a true woman, with many of the foibles and failings of her sex; but curiosity had no place in her Still, when she began to composition. observe that her husband became silent and abstracted, that he seemed nervous and agitated, that his nights were often sleepless, and that a constant craving for artificial stimulants seemed to be developed within him, whatever slight curiosity she had at first felt concerning the nature of the business relations between him and Thompson, and had at once repelled, returned intensified into what she could not hide from herself was suspicion.

But by no persuasion and entreaty could she get anything out of him. He replied to her questions in an off-hand manner, or he would brusquely tell her that it was no affair of hers, and that so long as she and her little Joan were above want she was not to bother him.

Then, suddenly, matters took a turn for the worse. For a fortnight Richard never left the house. At the end of this period, he told her that business was bad, and that they must seek a humbler lodging; and once again she sank into the old life of squalor and want. Thompson did not come near them, and Richard explained that he had been called away to France on business matters, but that, if she could patiently wait a little longer, a happier condition of things would return.

But meanwhile the little hoard of savings which Barbara had been able to put by, grew smaller and smaller; rags and patches again appeared on her husband's clothes, for what with her slop work for the Jew tailors, and the incessant attention which little Joan, who was again weak and ailing, required, the poor woman had

hardly an hour in the day to call her own. Meat had to be tabooed, and once more the bad times seemed to have come upon them.

Then, just as matters were at their worst, Richard returned home one evening with the glad news that his " partner" had returned to London after having successfully completed arrangements for a new branch of business, and that he himself was to start early the next morning upon an expedition into the country, which might necessitate his absence from home for a week.

Late that night Thompson called. He was in a boisterous mood of good-humour; and, in his boon-companion fashion, did his best to encourage poor Barbara in the hope that the turning in the long lane was now reached, and that she might confidently greet the dawn of a brighter era in her life. But Richard did not seem to share his partner's enthusiasm; his smiles were forced, his remarks and replies absent and distracted; and it was only after Thompson had pressed again and again the whisky bottle on him, that he assumed even an appearance of content and satisfaction.

"Mrs. P. mum," said Thompson as he rose to take his leave. "Your old man is hipped-down in the mouth-out of sorts. He wants change of scene and air. Let him be away with me for a week, and I'll warrant he comes back a different chap. Lord bless you! I know what it is to feel that life ain't worth living, and to see nothink before one but ruin and starvation. But I've pulled through it, mum, I've pulled through it, and the result is that I've been able to give an old friend a helping hand. I'm a queer sort o' cuss, Mrs. P., but some day you'll thank me, that you will.'

"I'm sure I do thank you, Mr. Thompson," murmured Barbara, "but I can't bear to see my husband so down; and it seems as if nothing would ever set him up again."

"Patience, my dear madam, patience," said her visitor almost paternally. "You'll be rich, and drive in your own carriage yet; and then you'll laugh at these days just as I, John Thompson, often laugh at the day when I felt so down in my luck that I bought a six-shooter, and went away into the bush to put myself out of the world, when I found I'd forgotten to buy cartridges, and went back just in time to strike the Blue Peter lode, which, as you know, turned out the richest quartz in Victoria."

So he rattled on, until he succeeded in actually making Barbara feel hopeful; and then he went away, reminding Richard that he must be at the Cannon Street

station early the next morning.

After his departure, Richard relapsed into the listless dejection from which he had been temporarily roused; but Barbara in vain tried to get him to give an answer to her questions as to where he and Thompson were going, and as to the nature of the business which would necessitate his absence from home for a week.

Then, again, a suspicion crossed her mind that the character of the "partnership" was of a nature to be ashamed of. So far as she knew, her husband, throughout all the vicissitudes of his career, had maintained his character unblemished; she had never questioned his probity, but the recollection that he had at one time been associated with this very man Thompson in racing transactions, called up to her mind terrible pictures of the crime and ruin into which well-meaning men, in desperate moments, had been hurled, by connection with the turf.

Her heart sank as she put the question

to him :

"Richard, are you and Mr. Thompson

engaged in racing matters?"

And she uttered a little cry of agony when, with a sudden raising of his head, he replied:

"Yes, Barbara, for your sake and for little Joan's. There is nothing else to be done; and, remember, it is-it is a perfectly legal and honourable business."

Barbara fell at his feet and implored him to abandon his association with such a calling. Better, she said, that they should leave the country by stealth and return to Australia and misery, than flourish by such She reminded him of friends means. they had known who had been ruined and disgraced by betting; she asked him if he could ever enjoy comforts purchased by such means, and if he could ever hope for help or recognition from his brother if the latter should find out that the beggar outcast, who implored his help and recognition, was nothing more or less than a racecourse vulture.

Richard was obdurate; the die was cast, he said, and he must continue what he had commenced. Finally, with the fumes of the villainous whisky in his brain, he turned upon the poor, crouching, tearful woman, and, with such an oath as she had never heard him utter before, bade her mind her own business at home, and he would take care of his own concerns abroad.

Sheer exhaustion of body and mind wrapped Barbara in heavy sleep that night. In the morning when she awakened her husband had gone.

CHAPTER II.

DURING the six weeks which elapsed since Joan Palgrave made her ill-timed appeal to her husband in the garden at King's Court in the matter of the London waifs and strays, she had carried the day

on that point,

Seeing that his Australian brother had accepted his fate, and had refrained from waylaying him, and pestering him for help, Nathaniel Palgrave had softened in mood; his wife had sounded him again and again, and finally he had given way, not graciously, for it was not his habit to recede graciously from any position which he had once taken up; but he had given way, and Joan was at liberty to carry out her long-cherished scheme.

Into this scheme she threw herself, heart and soul, with all the loving enthusiasm of a woman who, deprived by fate of the privilege of having children of her own to tend and care for, feels an irresistible yearning towards the children of others.

The cottagers of King's Court, tenants every one of them of Palgrave, ardent worshippers of Joan, received with acclamation the proposition that during the long, sunny weeks of summer, they should receive, as guests, the little wan-faced Londoners who knew little about woods and meadows beyond what they learned from picture-books and hearsay; and the first batch of arrivals were received almost with the honours of a conquering host.

Palgrave had given way, but only under the strictest limitations; the smallest infraction of laws, the slightest disposition to disorder and insubordination, the first indications that any seeds of London crime were floating about, would be punished summarily; the lad who trespassed in search of wild flowers, or who broke through a hedge in his ardent chase after a butterfly, or who showed a disposition to blacken the eyes of his yokel companions, or who tainted the pure air with London ribaldry, was to be packed off immediately to his native slum. Absurd laws and regulations emanated from the great man's study, which seemed to have refer-

ence to an approaching influx of Irish harvesters or Whitechapel hop-pickers, rather than to a shoal of poor little mites, upon the majority of whom the aspect of the beautiful country had an awful and reverence-inspiring influence. At first he would have ordained that as little acquaintance as possible should be cultivated between the young Londoners and their Kentish companions; but Joan pointed out the utter absurdity of such a requirement, and showed that by enforcing it half the enjoyment of the holiday would be swept away.

Palgrave never condescended to go amongst the holiday-makers, and affected an absolute indifference about their very existence; a policy which made him an object of ridicule and contempt amongst the neighbouring gentry and farmers, who came forward and aided Joan in her good

work, heartily and joyfully.

Not a man, woman, or child had the smallest reason to regret what the local newsman playfully termed the invasion of Londoners. The astounding ignorance of most of the London youngsters concerning the commonest objects of country life, afforded endless amusement to the villagers: their joy and enthusiasm over a captured butterfly or the most ordinary wild flower; the perfect content with which they roamed over fields or explored the dark recesses of woods during whole days, without desiring any more exciting recreation, puzzled the natives, to whom fields and woods were simply what the yellow primrose was to Wordsworth's boy. At first they seemed to move about as if spellbound, talking in whispers, and pointing out to each other the wonders and beauties of the nature around them, as if in the neighbourhood of some awful, unseen presence.

But when once they had shaken off the restraint of these new impressions, and the electricity of the fresh, sweet air had permeated their veins, the outburst of childish enthusiasm and delight, the shouting, the singing, the romping, would have touched perhaps even the unsympathetic heart of Nathaniel Palgrave could he have

seen it.

The only sad moments during these weeks of summer enjoyment, were when the time came for one batch of visitors to be replaced by another. Every fortnight the little station of King's Court presented the spectacle of an assemblage of the childhood of our City, many members of which dwelt in neighbouring courts and alleys, yet as distinct in appearance as representatives of widely separated countries.

Here were drawn up the new arrivals, with their thin, white, pinched faces, and their shrunken limbs. A few yards away stood those who had finished their holiday, sun-burnt, rosy-cheeked, well-fed, and healthy-looking. In the hands of the former were the poor battered cherished toys of the gutter and the attic. In the arms of the latter was the many-coloured spoil of thicket and meadow, to be jealously tended probably during many a long day to come in the sunless garret, and to be shown with pride and happy recollection until nothing should be left but bare twigs and faded leaves.

They would eye each other until the train drew up at the platform, envy from half, pity from the other half; then would arise the shrill volume of parting cheers; words of instruction and advice from those leaving; messages of safe arrival from those who had just come; and if there was almost as much sorrow as there was delight amongst the little hearts, it was a tribute of appreciation and thanks to the good people who had planned and carried out the idea.

One child alone was privileged to see many batches of invaders arrive and de-

She was a fair-haired, blue-eyed child of seven, so delicate, that her frame seemed to be of the finest porcelain rather than of Anglo-Saxon bone and thew-absolutely alone and friendless, and answering to the one name of Johnnie.

"Johnnie be'ant a gal's name," would remark the sturdy village children, whose first practice was to find out the names of

their guests.

"Johnnie whaat?" would say another. "King's Court way 'most every one hev two names. It's main queer to hev nought but one."

But that was all she could tell them; and with that they were obliged to be satisfied. So Johnnie she remained, and as Johnnie she became the friend and protegée of half the children who came to King's Court, partly because she was weak and solitary, and partly because she was absolutely unchildlike in her sweetness and gentleness of disposition.

"To send that child Johnnie back to her garret would be absolute murder," said Joan Palgrave, who had interested herself

about her from the ordinary run of little "invaders." "I can't make her out, for although she was found in a more miserable condition than nine-tenths of the children who come to us, there is much in her manner and conduct which convinces me that there is a story connected with her."

Joan Palgrave soon had every reason to be glad that she had decided to keep Johnnie longer in the country than the fortnight, which was usual with the others, for, so far from profiting by the new life, and the pure country air, the child grew feebler and paler, until Mrs. Palgrave called in the doctor.

"Mrs. Palgrave," said the latter, "this child must be isolated. She is sickening

for scarlet-fever."

This was simple enough advice, but, under the circumstances, was by no means easy to put into execution, for the small village and every farm-house within a radius of five miles from King's Court, had its quota of inmates; and to go further afield would not only have prevented Mrs. Palgrave from giving her special attention to a patient in whom she took almost a maternal interest, but would have interfered with her duties towards others.

She pondered deeply over the best course to be pursued, and the only solution of the problem which presented itself to her, was the taking of a step which might be fraught with very serious consequences, and this was, that the sick child should actually be accommodated within the walls of her own

Of course, the bare suggestion of such a plan to her husband would have been metaphorically the holding up of a red rag to a bull. He would have thundered forth his usual formula, "I told you so! I told you so! You get them down here, and they bring with them the foulness and impurities of London, and my model village for the sake of a woman's whim will be turned into a pest-house."

She would have to do what she intended quietly and in secret; and, much as it went against her nature to deceive her husband, even in the most trivial matter, she felt that the case was one of life and death, and that she would be more conscientiously performing her duty in keeping knowledge from him, than in neglecting a child virtually committed to her care.

King's Court was a large, rambling house, of a type common enough in our southern counties, and one entire wing of it had not in the child as having something different | been inhabited for many years. In this

wing Johnnie might remain for weeks and months, without the master of the house being aware of her existence, for the servants beloved their mistress as much as they dreaded their master, and the slightest expression of will on her part was to them paramount command.

When she acquainted the Doctor with her resolution he whistled, and significantly

remarked, "And your husband?

"He must know nothing about it," replied Joan. "There is a side gate into the grounds, and a side door into the house by which you can always obtain access, and the rest you can leave to me and my servants."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Doctor, in admiration, "there's no fear of old England going to the dogs, as croakers preach it is going, whilst there are women in it like you, Mrs. Palgrave."

So Johnnie was quietly removed that same night from the cottage in the village, and comfortably installed in a little old-fashioned room on the ground-floor of the Court, to which there was easy access from Mrs. Palgrave's room.

The removal was conducted so quietly and secretly that no one but Mrs. Palgrave and the two servants, who effected the transportation, knew anything about it.

Stay! One man saw the whole proceeding; a man skulking in the shrubbery close to the house under cover of the summer twilight, and who vented his opinion as fellows:

"Blest if I knew there was any kids knocking about here, if I wouldn't have

fixed matters different!"

That man was Mr. John Thompson.

CHAPTER III.

JOAN'S birthday was always celebrated with great rejoicings at King's Court. There was a rustic entertainment in the great meadow during the day, followed by a supper and a dance in the evening, whilst for the personal and more distinguished friends of the family there was a big dinner at the Court. To this dinner came all the notabilities of the neighbourhood, whilst a special train brought down from London a contingent of the Squire's West End friends.

The company were assembled in the grand old dining-room; the first instalments of the Squire's choicest vintages were beginning to thaw those glacial barriers with which English diners-out Thompson had worked himself into a fit

surround themselves until influences of a genial nature are brought to bear upon them; Joan Palgrave, calm and beautiful in her simple white dress, unadorned save by one magnificent Maréchal Niel rose, was trying to assume an air of gaiety she was far from feeling; the Squire at his end of the table was discussing local matters with brother landowners; all was light and brilliancy, and sweet scents and cheerful sounds, when a manservant rushed unceremoniously into the room, with a scared face, and in a trembling but clearly audible whisper said to Nathaniel Palgrave:

"Come upstairs, sir, at once; there's murder been done!"

The Squire dropped the glass he was in the act of raising to his lips and sprang up from his seat; a dead silence followed, and in a minute the entire company, guests and servants, were following Mrs. Palgrave, who had heard the message, up to the room wherein lay little Johnnie.

There, half lying on the ground in a pool of blood, they saw Richard Palgrave. The child was sitting up in bed, crying aloud in terror; the window was thrown up, and the large square of glass was

shattered.

In the wounded man Nathaniel Palgrave at once recognised his brother, and staggered back with a look of horror on his Then he gazed at the crying child.

"What does this mean?" he asked hoarsely. "Whose child is this? How came my-this man here? O Heaven!

This is retribution!"

They raised Richard Palgrave on to the couch at the foot of Johnnie's bed. There was a doctor amongst the company; he made a swift examination of the wounded man, shook his head, and whispered to the Squire:

"Get some brandy quick; he cannot live long, but he may be able to tell you

what has happened."

The brandy revived Richard Palgrave, and with much difficulty he told in a faint voice, as follows: That he and Thompson had planned to rob the house whilst the dinner was proceeding; that they had got as far as this room without being observed, but that when he, Richard Palgrave, saw his own child lying on a bed of sickness, and evidently nursed with almost maternal care, he had refused to go a step further, and had told Thompson that they must get away at once.

of fury at being balked in such a way, and had sworn that he would carry out his intention. That a struggle had ensued, during which he, Richard Palgrave, had managed to give the alarm by shattering the glass of the window, and awakening the child, whom they had found fast asleep, and that, upon this, Thompson, half-maddened with rage and disappointment, had struck him to the ground with several blows from a life-preserver, and had thrown up the window and escaped.

For some minutes there was stillness in the room, from which the guests and servants had withdrawn. The child was still calling aloud for her father; but with the last feeble words of his connection with what had taken place, his troubled spirit

had fled.

"His child!" said Nathaniel Palgrave, and, quitting his dead brother's side, he went to the bed, and in a gentle, soothing manner, which no one had believed him capable of showing, quieted Johnnie, and, turning to his wife, said: "Joan, I have murdered this poor fellow, although the hand of another dealt the blow; and this, his child, has saved us from robbery."

Messengers were immediately dispatched with news of the occurrence to the nearest police-station, together with as detailed a description of Thompson as could be gathered from the information of a terrified child. Then the birthday guests slowly dispersed, and Nathaniel Palgrave, the man of iron, who had never been known, even by his wife, to display tender emotion of any kind, sat down by the still, cold body of his brother, and sobbed violently whilst Joan told him the story of little Johnnie.

Every summer the children come trooping down to King's Court from the lanes, and alleys, and slums of outcast London. The cottage they love best as a holidayhome is that in which Barbara Palgrave and her daughter, who has now grown from pale, emaciated little Johnnie into a fair and graceful Joan, live; and the first face to welcome them, and the central figure in all their happiness and enjoyment during the sunny weeks, are those of Nathaniel Palgrave.

Nothing was heard of Thompson for a long time, until he was wounded to death in a poaching affray in the Northern Counties, and then, with his last breath,

he told the story of his criminal partnership in burglary and shop-lifting with Richard Palgrave.

THE CARMICHEL LEGACY.

BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

THREE o'clock on a hot summer's afternoon in London city, with torrid sunshine in the streets and heat radiating everywhere, while the chief business going on was in fruits and iced drinks; three o'clock striking on the big bell of Bow, and repeated by the bigger bell of Paul's, as Lady Jones's carriage drew up at Gorham House, which is situated in the very vortex of the City whirlpool. Lady Jones was small, thin, and middle-aged, but quick and nervous in her movements, and she had alighted and reached the porch of Gorham House before the rosy footman was half-way down from his perch. Lady Jones pursued her way with no uncertain steps, for Gorham House had long been familiar to her. It was there that her late husband had his offices, the celebrated Sir Isaac Jones, who had built more townhalls, theatres, chapels, and gaols than any man of his time.

Lady Jones hurried into a suite of offices, where many young men were at work among plans and drawings, half-buried among rolls of drawing-paper.

"If Mr. Robert is busy, I will wait," said Lady Jones, seating herself humbly on a chair in the outer office.

Presently an inner door opened, and a tall, good-looking young fellow, with dark, closely-shorn hair, made his appearance. This was Robert Carmichel, the young and able successor of Sir Isaac Jones. He was clever. He had plenty of energy and go about him; but he owed everything in life to Lady Jones—who had taken him up, adopted him, and pushed his fortune to its present agreeable height.

"My dear aunt," said the young man, coming forward and hurrying Lady Jones into his private room. "They only this moment told me you were here. What brings you into the City this broiling day? And you look so weary and worn."

And you look so weary and worn."
"I am weary," said Lady Jones with a sigh, "weary and sad. I have just heard

sad news—your poor father——"
"Well," said Robert, in a voice that expressed curiosity rather than emotion.

"He is dead."

There was no mistaking the sorrowful accents in which these words were spoken; they expressed something more than ordinary grief. As for Robert, his face retained its composure.

"How did he die?" he asked.

"Of fever, in some remote part of Africa."

"You are quite sure?" asked Robert with instinctive caution. "There is no

possibility of mistake?"

"My dear, it is official—through the Consul and the Foreign Office, and sent to me—expressly by his dying wish, it seems. Robert," cried Lady Jones, "oh, Robert, don't you see the full significance of that?"

Robert looked puzzled. After all, his father was little more than a name to him; he had seen him only at intervals of years, for Colonel Carmichel had had his head-quarters in Paris, and had been, moreover, an erratic kind of being, often impecunious, and generally full of wild enterprises and

adventures.

"My dear," said Lady Jones, still with suppressed emotion, "I had a letter from him—from your father, only a few days ago—a beautiful letter. Robert, I believe that if your father had lived he would have come home to us—to you and me. And, Robert," with a faint blush, "I might

have been your step-mother."

"You would have married him, aunt?"

cried Robert.

"Robert, I loved your father—he was my first, my only love; I don't mind confessing it now that he is dead. But read his letter, Robert, it contains a message for you."

Robert read his father's letter calmly and critically. The only paragraph that referred to him was as follows: "If you should hear of anything happening to us up the country, tell Robert I can leave him nothing but a good name—and a certain responsibility, which I hope he will fulfil as best he can."

"Now what does that mean?" asked Robert, reading the passage aloud.

"Debts, perhaps—I must pay them," said Lady Jones, hastily. "Well, that story is told. Now let us talk of the opening one. When are you going to speak to Clara?"

Now Clara was the daughter of Lady Jones's friend and neighbour, Nesbet, of The Elms. She would have a good fortune, and was handsome after a massive type. Robert had known her all his life,

and liked her too; but he was not in love with her or she with him. But they had acquiesced in the views of their elders, although Clara was suspected of a preference for a young man of a merry, pleasant humour, one Harry Levison, a subaltern in an infantry regiment, whose position was hardly substantial enough to please Mr. Nesbet.

Lady Jones suggested that Robert should come up to The Willows that very night and make his proposal to Clara, before the other one had declared himself. Robert assented without any great eagerness. But, as it happened, there was a press of work that night, and Robert was detained at Gorham House till after eight, and he was tired and sleepy when he reached his chambers, in a handsome new mansion in Bloomsbury, built after his own designs. He stumbled upstairs half asleep and grumbling at having to dress and turn out again, and he grumbled still more when, on opening his outer door, he found the whole place in darkness; the lamp in the corridor unlit; and no light either in his servant's room.

"So much for old retainers," muttered Robert. In fact his household was not exactly on a perfect footing. Basset, the man, was never about when he was wanted, and his wife, who had once been Lady Jones's maid, hardly atoned for her husband's shortcomings. Anyhow they had both gone out and left the place to take care of itself; and Robert, all in darkness, had to grope his way to the sitting-room chimney-piece for a match.

When the match was struck and a lamp lighted, Robert looked about him, wondering whether he was awake or simply dreaming. There, in his own easy-chair, was reclining a young woman, fast asleep; sleeping so soundly indeed, that the sudden access of light only caused her to knit her eyebrows slightly, without awaking her. Across the young woman's knees lay a small creature, a boy apparently, with absurdly small boots and long black stockings, whose head was pillowed on her bosom; while on a stool at her feet was stretched a little girl with her head leaning against her mother's knees, and almost enveloped in her black trailing skirt. All about were strewn shawls, wrappers, and hand-bags, some of them bearing clean white labels, marked "Baggages Ouest," which seemed to show that the little group of sleepers had but recently crossed the Channel.

"There is some mistake here," said Robert to himself in amazement, "Visitors for some other person's chambers, shown

into the wrong flat."

They were sweet-looking children—even the mother, as she slept, had a soft, childlike expression on her face. The face was charming, too; rather thin, perhaps, but with features admirably chiselled, and the form, stretched out in all the abandon of thorough repose, was of soft and graceful

contour.

Robert felt that it was a pity to disturb such a pleasing picture. And the poor things were evidently so tired; still the situation was embarrassing, and would grow more so the longer it was continued. But the boy now showed signs of awaking; his forehead puckered with wrinkles, and he rubbed his eyes vigorously with his little fist. Then his eyes opened wider and wider, as he took in the unaccustomed scene about him; the eyes finally settled upon Robert, looking into his in wonder, but without fear, and then the baby-face rippled into a smile. Robert was absurdly pleased that the child should smile at him.

"We are to be friends, then, little chap!"

he said, amiling too.

The boy, in trying to gain a sitting posture, aroused his mother, who opened her eyes, they were beautiful eyes of a deep, dark grey, and raising herself, looked about her vaguely at first and dazzled by the lamp-light; but presently coming to full consciousness, she looked up at Robert, while her cheeks were tinged with a faint blush.

"Are you, then, Robert?" she asked, looking enquiringly into the young man's face, and speaking with a pretty, foreign accent.

"I am Robert certainly; but I fear not the right one—Robert Carmichel is my

all name

"And I am Madame, that is, Mistress Carmichel; Denise my name—surely you have heard of Denise?" said the young woman, holding out her disengaged hand, the other being clasped round her boy. "You did not expect me, perhaps. Can it be that my letter did not arrive?"

"I have not received it certainly; but

is there not some mistake?"

"Ah, you did not think I was so young perhaps. You expected that your father's wife would be some one more aged and more dignified than me?"

"To say the truth," replied Robert,

whose face wore an expression of perplexity and dismay, "I did not know that there was any 'you' at all."

"Ah, he did not write to you about me

"Ah, he did not write to you about me and these little ones," cried Mrs. Carmichel with an expression of pain on her countenance. "But it was to you J was told to come if any misfortune should happen; and, alas! there have been grave

misfortunes."

Gloom overspread Robert's face. He saw what all this meant. This was the responsibility at which his father's letter had hinted. It was all so characteristic: the light-hearted assumption of such serious ties; their equally light-hearted transfer to another's shoulders. Robert thought himself the most ill-used man in the world, and his face showed what he thought. Mrs. Carmichel read its expression clearly enough, and tears of weariness and disappointment suffused her eves.

"We are not welcome, monsieur," she said, drawing her children to her with quiet dignity. "You think that we demand of your charity. But it is not so. You will please send some one for a 'voiture,' w shall find some furnished hotel. Cecilee my darling, rouse yourself; we have to go

elsewhere.

A gust of wind and the rattle of summer rain against the tall windows seemed to accentuate the position as the little girl awoke, shivered, yawned, and then, with round, wide-opened eyes, looked about her.

"Ah, we are 'chez nous' again, mamms. And is this the brother Robert you told

me about. But he is tall!"

Tall as he was, the child ran up to him and put up her arms, which reached to about the second button of his waistcoat, and so by gentle gradations pulled him downwards, till she was able to put her arms round his neck and kiss him. The pressure of those tiny arms about his neck, and of the velvet lips upon his rough cheek, gave Robert a distinct thrill of emotion. He took the child in his arms and pressed her cheek to his.

"You will kiss your brother, too, before we go," said Mrs. Carmichel timidly,

holding the boy towards him.

And Robert performed this ceremony with some awkwardness, taking the boy on his knee, while Cecile stood by his side examining the features of her newly-discovered relative with frank curiosity.

"As for going," said Robert, "you must

not think of it. To-morrow I will help you to find an abode. My aunt, I am sure, will want to have you. You see," he added apologetically, "I was taken by surprise, and I am vexed, too, that nothing has been done to make you comfortable; and where my servants are I really don't know."

"We frightened the 'vieille' dame,", said Cecile readily. "She let us in and then ran away, and then we all went to

sleep."

Just then Robert heard a latch-key turn in the outer door, and then the room door opened and Mrs. Basset's face—her thin, angular face—appeared in the opening. Robert called to her rather angrily, and bade her get something ready for his guests at once. Mrs. Basset was evidently in a bad temper, and regarded the new arrivals with unconcealed aversion.

"I thought it right my lady should know what had happened, and I have been to Highgate to tell her; and she sends her love, Mr. Robert, and will you see her to-night, please, no matter how late it may

be."

Robert growled at this, but thought it better to obey Lady Jones's behests. But he saw that his guests were duly served with refreshments, and he had his own bedroom prepared for their use. "You do not put me out at all," he said in reply to Mrs. Carmichel's expostulations. "There is always a room ready for me at Highgate, and I shall sleep there to-night. So consider the place as your own."

"But you will come and see the children before you go," said Mrs. Carmichel. "They are so delighted with the big bed.

Come and see my darlings."

Robert could not refuse; and really the children looked charming, Toto already asleep, and Cecile with her arm about her

brother's neck.

"You will love them a little, will you not, Robert?" said Mrs. Carmichel, laying her hand in appealing fashion upon his arm. "You will be a little to them the

father they have lost ?"

Robert stared at the patterns of the carpet in a good deal of perplexity. He had tried to harden his heart against this forlorn little family. He told himself that if he were not resolute at the beginning, he would be saddled with all the responsibility of these embarrassing relations. And yet his heart was melted, in spite of his efforts to remain cold.

"You do not answer me," cried Mrs, Carmichel, her voice tremulous with emotion. "Robert, you will not give them up?"

"No, I will not give them up," said Robert, after a moment's hesitation. "I

will be a brother to them."

Mrs. Carmichel threw her arms round her children impulsively, and bedewed their faces with tears that would not now be denied.

"I think he must be not a brother, but a papa," said Cecile sleepily, "for he has

made mamma cry."

When Robert reached The Willows, Lady Jones called him into the library and questioned him narrowly about the new arrivals. It was easy to see that she was extremely hurt and indignant at the existence of the young widow and her children. All the sentiment and pathos of the situation had vanished as far as she was concerned.

"Whatever may be arranged," said Lady Jones, "it is quite impossible that these people can remain with you."

Robert's reply was vague. But Lady Jones determined that there should be no vagueness on this point. She would herself descend upon the scene and put this young woman to flight.

At this point Clara Nesbet made her appearance, her neck and shoulders en-

veloped in a light wrapper.

"I am going, Lady Jones. Goodnight."

"I will see you across the garden," cried Robert.

It was a pleasant summer night, soft and starlit, the air perfumed with flowers just the time for a love scene; but Robert was not in the humour for his part.

Clara questioned him as they walked about his newly-discovered relatives.

"It is a happy thing for you, Robert," she said. "It will be a kind of education for you. People grow up so selfish and self-contained if they have no family ties. Serve an apprenticeship of five years or so as a family man, and you will be worthy of some good woman."

Robert laughed a little scornfully.

"Why, Clara, I had something serious

to say to you."

"Don't say it, Robert," cried Clara decisively. "I shall recognise the style of Lady Jones if the words are your own. Robert, please pull up that hurdle."

This was the only barrier between the grounds of The Willows and The Elms;

and having crossed the Rubicon, Clara nodded good-night, and ran quickly away

over the grass.

As for Denise and her children, their first night under English skies was spent in the happy oblivion of perfect rest. spite of her anxieties, Denise slept the sleep of the just, and was only aroused in broad daylight by the splashing of water, and the subdued cries of Master Toto, to whom Cecile was endeavouring to give his bath. Denise laughed joyously at the sight, wondering that she could feel so light-hearted. And then she finished off Cecile's rather patchy performance, and quickly dressing herself and the children, found her way to the room where breakfast was already laid.

Basset was moving noiselessly to and fro, putting the finishing touches to the arrangement of the table. Freshly-cut flowers, the glittering silver equipage, the delicate porcelain - all was bright and "recherché." And Basset was an excellent servant and knew his duties perfectly. although, thanks to his having an easy master, he was often slack in their per-But though he spoke to the formance. foreign lady with velvety politeness, his face wore an evil scowl when he thought himself unobserved. Hitherto, as soon as his master's breakfast was over, Basset had been free for the day, and had devoted himself with much assiduity to improve the shining hours. Sandown and Kempton Park were favourite resorts of his, and he sometimes ventured to spend a couple of days at Newmarket, his wife accounting for his absence on the score of the illness of some apocryphal relative. Basset was much younger than his wife, who entertained an unreasoning affection for him, and supplied him with money as long as her resources lasted. There were signs, however, of the speedy exhaustion of this source of supply.

Although not generally an early riser, Basset had already visited Highgate that morning; had ascertained that his master would breakfast at The Willows, and had obtained from him the key of the platechest, on the ground that, as there were visitors at home, the best silver service would be required. Lady Jones had taken care that Robert should be well provided in the way of plate; there were services that had been presented to her husband on various occasions, massive side dishes, and rich epergnes; all of which were gave a bachelor's entertainment to his friends and clients.

Denise was secretly comforted by the evidences about her of easy circumstances, if not of actual wealth. Her husband had never confided to her his affairs; but until the last few months, when all news of him had ceased, and his bankers had declared that there were no more funds of his in hand, the Colonel's household had been always liberally supplied. Then the news had come of his death; and there had been a scramble among the creditors for the Colonel's belongings. Still she had not doubted that her late husband had property of some kind in England, and every one had advised her to depart from the scene of litigation and trouble, and to seek a more tranquil asylum in England with the Colonel's grown - up son, who would certainly know all about his father's affairs. The grown-up son had also been a surprise to her; she had only known of his existence within the past few weeks; but her husband had always been so reticent about his former life, that this was not to be wondered at.

Hardly was breakfast finished when a visitor was announced. "Lady Jones to see Mrs. Carmichel." Denise rose and advanced to meet her with curiosity, and some trepidation. Here was somebody of importance no doubt, and soon the curtain would be raised that concealed the prospect

of the future.

"You don't know me, my dear," began Lady Jones. "But I was a very old friend of poor Colonel Carmichel; and I am Robert's guardian, and from Robert, or, at least, on

his behalf, I come here."

Denise murmured a few words of conventional courtesy, and Lady Jones took up a position in Robert's easy-chair and went on talking with the air of one who means to be politely disagreeable. Having drawn from Denise all that she knew about her late husband's affairs, she bluntly assured her, that she had no claim upon anybody here. Robert owed everything he possessed to her, Lady Jones. connections were formed, and there was no room in his plan of life for any unexpected relatives. His friends were arranging his marriage, and it was quite impossible that he should furnish an asylum to Mrs. Carmichel and her children. The best advice that Lady Jones could give was, that she should return to the place whence she came with as little delay as possible. useful for display when Robert occasionally | But with respect to the children, who, through no fault of their own, were placed in such a cruel position, they should be taken care of.

"Would you take my children away from me—these young children, madame?" asked Denise, whose face had become sombre and charged with something like despair.

"Ob, we don't seek the responsibility," said Lady Jones, with a cruel calm. "It

is for you to say-"

"Ah, what shall I say?" cried Denise, pressing her hands to her forehead. How could she endure to part from her children, who had been the chief solace of her life? and yet she began to feel the iron bands of necessity enfolding her heart. What future was there for her and her children, but poverty and wretchedness? From this she could save them in sacrificing herself. The mental contest was a bitter one, but it

could end only in one way.

"Madame, I thank you for your good wishes to my children. You shall take them. I think that you have a kind heart where you have no prejudice, and that you will be kind to these little creatures. Yes, you shall take away my children. But take them now; at once. Do not lose a moment. Do not give me time to think. They are here—Cecile, Toto, will you not go 'en voiture,' with this dear lady, who will show you the shops, and buy chocolates for you and 'brioche'? You see, they are willing. Take them!"

Denise turned to the window and averted her face from the sight. Lady Jones held out a finger to each of the children and they trotted confidently beside her. But Cecile turned to her mamma dutifully. "Are you quite sure that you wish us to

go 1"

"Yes, go, my child," said Denise, with a heartbroken glance at her daughter's face.

All was going well with the little procession. Lady Jones was smiling down upon the children and talking to them in nursery patois, when, as they approached the staircase, the sight of the white and chilly descent, and some indefinite notion of an unknown world beyond where there was no mamma, worked so strongly upon little Toto's nerves that he turned and fled to his mother's arms.

Denise darted towards the child with the spring of a wild animal, and clasped him to her breast, while she turned a face

of defiance upon Lady Jones.

"They are mine; you shall not rob me. Cecile, come here. She is a wicked woman that——" Just then a step was heard in the corridor, and Robert appeared in the doorway; and upon him, too, Denise flashed out in

anger.

You did well, monsieur," she cried, "to send this lady to take away my children; but now we shall trouble you no more. We shall find a home for ourselves. And henceforth we are no longer of your friends."

Robert darted an angry glance at Lady Jones, a glance that cut her to the heart. What had she not done for Robert? And yet, having to choose between her and a strange woman, he abandoned her and clung to the stranger.

"You must have mistaken my aunt's meaning," said Robert. "Anyhow, nobody shall take your children away. Have I not promised to be a brother to them?"

"Very well," cried Lady Jones, white with suppressed anger. "It is your affair, Robert; but if you take her part against me, it is a thing I shall never forgive. Oh! never, never. It strikes me here," she gasped, laying her hand upon her heart; and, indeed, her face had assumed an ashen hue, and she seemed as if about to faint.

Robert ran to support her, but she waved

him away.

"My carriage," she cried to Basset, who now appeared with smooth, imperturbable face; and, leaning heavily on his arm, she slowly descended the staircase.

For a moment there was a gleam of triumph in the eyes of Denise. She had routed the enemy, she had still her children. But then came a revulsion of feeling.

"I have kept you, my children, but it is only for your misery;" and she burst into tears, while the little ones, amazed at such a turn of affairs, strove in vain to comfort

her.

Robert, who had followed his aunt to her carriage, now returned, and Denise dried her eyes and addressed him:

"I will not remain here to embroil you with your relatives. I will go back. I have friends in Paris who will help me to earn bread enough for these little ones. I will return."

Robert said: "No." He was now the head of the family, and it was for him to say what should be done. For the present they should remain with him. There were two spare rooms, and servants who had nothing to do; it would really be a charity to him if Denise would look after his affairs, and put his household in order.

"Ah, if I can be useful," said Denise, "then I would stay for awhile. But your fiancee, what will she say to the arrangement?"

Robert laughed.

"I have not gone so far yet; but the young lady whom my aunt designs for me is coming to see you herself—at the first

opportunity."

Denise consented to stay for a week; at the end of the week she agreed to remain for another fortnight; when the fortnight had elapsed a month hence was spoken of as the time of departure, a date which gradually became still more vague and distant.

Robert, indeed, found his life so much more bright and pleasant for the presence of those newly-found relatives, that he dreaded the prospect of losing them. Hitherto his life, apart from a hundred chance acquaintanceships, had been, in reality, solitary and self-contained. And now, unexpectedly coming down from the skies as it were, behold family ties, hearts which were his own by the very fact of kindred, a tender human sympathy which belonged to him of right, without any effort of his own to secure it. He began even to feel jealous of attempts to alter the existing state of affairs, and especially of those of his friends who suggested themselves as admirers of Denise.

And Mr. Nesbet, Clara's father, had almost come to pose in this character!

The two girls, Clara and Denise, had come to be enthusiastic friends. Clara would hardly let a day pass without seeing Denise and her children. Young Levison, too, was generally in close attendance upon Clara, a jovial, good-natured, little fellow, who was always devising schemes of amusement, and whom the little ones positively adored.

But Mr. Nesbet was growing quite sentimental and melancholy. Denise was always cordial and sympathetic with him; she admired his strong potential figure, which suggested a patriarchal kind of authority. But when she became conscious that his feelings in her regard were not altogether paternal, she recoiled a little from his attentions. Already she had married once to order, and one for whom she had entertained no warmer feelings than a doubtful kind of respect. Was it to be her fate never to know the emotions of a real passion? But the advantages were undeniable: Nesbet was rich; her children would be well provided for; as to that, she could make her conditions.

"It is such a pity," said Clara to her friend one day. She was spending the afternoon in Bloomsbury, and a dinner-party was in prospect, where Nesbet and several others were expected. "It is such a pity that you should be his step-mother. You would have suited Robert so admirably as his wife. When I see you together, I always think you the most charming couple."

"Ma chère!" cried Denise, blushing to the roots of her hair. "How can you

suggest such dreadful things ?"

"Not dreadful at all," continued Clara boldly. "It is only our narrow way of seeing them. There are some races, the Mongols, I fancy, where the son, when the father dies, takes over his wives as a matter of course."

Denise put her hand over Clara's mouth, and put a stop to her remarks. But they had produced a certain effect quite different from what the speaker intended. They opened Denise's eyes. She felt that she was growing too fond of Robert; their sympathies, their affections, were growing together; and, in fact, the position was one that could not be indefinitely continued.

"I must escape," said Denise to herself, and if Mr. Nesbet shows me the way of

escape, I must accept it."

Meantime Denise, putting aside her anxious mood, was busy and perplexed over the preparations for the dinner-party. Robert had hoped that it would have been a festival of conciliation, for Lady Jones had been invited-specially invited by a joint letter from Denise and Robert. But Lady Jones replied, and not ill-naturedly, that she had not sufficiently recovered her temper to see either of them with any pleasure just yet. Then Mrs. Basset had been very troublesome. She had fought hard against the new condition of things; but Denise had managed to establish her authority. The dinner was provided outside, but Basset organise the waiting—and Basset had disappeared. According to his wife, he had been summoned to the dying-bed of an aunt; but even Mrs. Basset seemed not to be inspired with strong conviction as to the aunt. And Basset had taken with him the key of the plate-chest—the chest being an iron safe which was designed to set burglars at defiance, and which was now equally impervious to its lawful possessors.

Happily young Levison was at hand, and was despatched to Highgate to bring all available and necessary plate from The Elms. And there was nothing lacking at the dinner-table to an ordinary observer, although Robert noticed at once the absence of his own familiar belongings.

"The Bassets must clear out," said Robert, when Denise explained to him the state of affairs.

"Do not part with the Bassets," said Denise. "They know your ways, and when I am gone they will be better behaved."

"But you are not going?" said Robert.

"Alas, I must go!" said Denise sadly.

"You have been very good to me, Robert,
and we have been very happy, but it must
come to an end. I shall take the Nesbet
plate to my own room, Robert, if you will
carry it for me, for it is heavy."

Robert shouldered the box of plate and carried it off, staying for a moment to kiss the children as they lay asleep in their little cots. When he returned, Mrs. Basset was waiting to see him.

"I suppose we've got to go, sir," she said in a tone of melancholy resignation.

"If you get rid of your husband you needn't," said Robert, with a touch of compunction in his voice.

"No, sir; I'll follow his fortunes to the

end," she replied sighing.

Robert had work to do, and he sat up over it till he fell asleep in his chair. He awoke feeling as cold and miserable as people generally do in such a case. As he made his way to his bedroom he thought he heard a footstep creeping along the outer corridor. Here was Basset, probably, returning from the bedside of his relative, and it occurred to Robert that the man had the key of the plate-chest, and that it would be well to secure it.

Robert opened his door and looked out. The next moment he found himself sprawling on the floor, the result of a heavy blow delivered by some blunt instrument. Fortunately, the main force of the blow had been expended on the door jamb, and, although Robert was stunned for the moment, he speedily recovered his senses, and was able to follow his assailant, who seemed now to be engaged in forcing a door that opened into the further end of the corridor—the door that led into Mrs. Carmichel's apartments.

Just as he had succeeded in his purpose—which was executed in such a noisy, careless manner as to show that the marauder was reckless of consequences, and intended to silence his victims in the shortest and surest manner; just as the

door was forced and a cry of alarm was heard from within—Robert grappled with the burglar and brought him to the ground. A short but terrible struggle ensued, in which Robert proved the stronger of the two, and knelt upon his antagonist, grasping him firmly by the throat.

Denise, pale and dishevelled, came forward with a light. It was Basset who lay there writhing and struggling on the ground. When Robert saw this, he loosened his hold, and, giving the man a contemp-

tuous shake, bade him get up.

"I give in, sir," said the man, sullenly. "You've got me right enough. There's nobody in it but me. I gave the old lady a dose to keep her quiet; but she'll wake up all right." But, outspoken as he was, the man showed plenty of cunning. "You can't have me for burglary," he said, "there was no breaking in. It's only assault with intent, after all. You'd best let me go."

"And what shall I find in the plate-

chest ?" asked Robert.

The man laughed defiantly:

"There's a fine collection of brickbats,

I expect."

Eventually it was only for making free with the plate-chest that Basset was arraigned, and he was let off with six months' hard labour, at the end of which he was free to pursue his sporting career. But an account of the affair, magnified by rumour, soon reached Lady Jones, who came from Highgate at the utmost speed to which the stout coachman could be persuaded to urge his fat horses. She found Robert with his head bandaged up, and looking pale and interesting, but extremely comfortable, with Denise waiting upon him assiduously, and the children doing their best to amuse him. Lady Jones was full of contrition for having given him "those wretches," the Bassets, to look after him; and there was complete reconciliation all round, while three or four times a day messengers would arrive from The Willows, laden with hot-house grapes, flowers, and other luxuries for the benefit of the invalid and his attendants.

When Robert was cured of his hurt, there came an urgent invitation from The Willows. Mrs. Carmichel was to go and spend a few weeks there with her children, while Robert would be equally welcome at The Elms, and those dreadful rooms might be shut up for awhile till the establishment could be reorganised. Denise accepted the invitation for all parties.

But there was some sadness at leaving, for it was evident that Denise would return no more to Bloomsbury, and both she and Robert had been happier during the past few months than they cared to confess. Lady Jones had arranged a state dinnerparty for the day of their arrival, and at the last moment, Robert received a note from Lady Jones. "An unexpected guest will arrive—prepare Denise and yourself for a great, and, I hope, an agreeable surprise." Denise read the note over Robert's shoulder, and turned pale with apprehension.

All was gay and festive at The Willows that night as Lady Jones's guests were gathered in her drawing-room, awaiting the summons for dinner. But there was no startling presence so far, only the old familiar faces were there, although Lady mysterious and anxious, was evidently waiting for some favoured guest. At last, however, she ordered dinner to be served; but when her guests had taken their places, it was seen that a vacant chair was reserved on the right hand of the hostess, while she had arranged that Mrs. Carmichel should be placed between Mr. Nesbet and the ominous blank. Clara had fallen to Robert's share, while young Levison beamed at her from the opposite side of the table.

At what moment it happened no one could justly say; but all of a sudden the vacant place was filled. There is no room for demonstration of feeling at a dinnertable; but a general thrill ran through the assembled company, for the belated guest was universally recognised as Colonel Carmichel. Robert turned white and red, and kept his eyes fixed upon Denise. It was a cruel surprise for her surely, and yet, strange to say, she was the most unembarrassed of the party. She talked with the new-comer, smiled sometimes, was pleased and interested, but in no ways moved or excited.

Mr. Nesbet glowered across Denise at the Colonel with much indignation. "I think," he said, turning to his neighbour on the other side, "that a man who leaves his family and duties to wander about in wild countries, should be ostracised, madam, and deprived of civil rights."

But no one paid any attention to Nesbet, while the Colonel seemed in excellent spirits and told some good stories, that set everybody laughing at his end of the table.

As soon as the ladies made a move,

Colonel Carmichel lighted a cheroot—a thing previously unknown at The Willows—and came to sit beside Robert.

"So, young fellow, you have been very kind to Mrs. Carmichel, I hear. I am glad she found a good friend, poor girl, for her husband—he was one of the Staffordshire Carmichels, Robert—was the best friend and comrade I ever had."

"I don't understand," stammered Robert.

"Poor fellow," said the Colonel, shaking his head, "I stood beside him when he died. Some stupid people muddled the matter, I hear, and reported me as dead; but I have come home to settle at last. I shall come and stay with you, Robert, for a bit, if you will have me."

Robert said "Yes;" but he was too much confused and mixed up to know exactly what he was doing or saying. He was glad that his father carried him off straight from the dinner-table and took him to the theatre, and then to Robert's Club, and home to Robert's chambers in the small hours of the morning.

"An unlucky fellow was Jack Carmichel," said the Colonel between the whiffs of his cheroot. "Quarrelled with all his friends, muddled away his fortune; at last took this appointment, which I told him meant certain death, and, would you believe it, a fortnight before his death an uncle died, with whom he had quarrelled more than anybody, and left him a hundred thousand pounds or so, and the poor fellow never knew it, and died tormenting himself about the fate of those he left behind him; and those children will be well-off now, you see, and the mother, too."

This last piece of news decided Robert; he could go no more near Denise. How could she bear to look upon him, who had obtained so much love, and kindness, and sympathy under false pretences?

Robert buried himself assiduously in his work, and went near Highgate no more, hearing plenty of news about it, however, from his father, who spent the greater part of his time there. But, one evening, coming in late, the Colonel brought home a note which he put in Robert's hands.

"DEAR ROBERT," ran the letter, "I see that you condemn me as an impostor, although, indeed, an innocent one, and think me unworthy of further notice. But the children, you must own, are innocent; and they are wondering that you don't come, and Toto, I fear, is fretting. So come to see them, even if you avoid

"DENISE.

"P.S.-Your father is going to marry the lady of The Willows, and I tell her she will have to change its name to The Laurels, in honour of her warrior. And Clara is engaged to young Levison. And there is nothing but billing and cooing in the air. It is all very fine for them, but for me a little dull."

Robert dispatched his business in all haste next day, and hurried up to The Willows

First he tried the library, where he found his father and Lady Jones sitting with one volume between them, and that turned upside down. Then the sounds of disconnected cherds of music led him to the drawing-room, and there he saw Clara sitting at the piano, and playing with one hand, while the other was imprisoned by Mr. Levison.

A sympathetic maid told Robert that he would find Mrs. Carmichel in the morningroom. She was sitting by the window, looking rather pale and depressed, while the children were playing unheeded by her side. The little ones gave a cry of delight at the sight of Robert, and Denise sprang to her feet, blushing very red, while her eyes were filled with light.

The children clasped his knees.

"Oh! Robbie dear," said Cecile, "we are so tired of here; do take us 'chez nous, ","

And Toto, who was losing his French as fast as he could, tugged at him, and

"Yes, yes, come home."
"And you, Denise," cried Robert, open-

ing his arms, "will you come home, too!"
"Ah, Robert, I am there already," replied Denise nestling her head upon his shoulder.

"SUMMER FOR EVER!" By MARIA L. JENKIN.

CHAPTER L

"SUMMER for ever!"

This was uttered in a heat-softened ecstasy by Mortimer Powell, a youth lying in a hammock which was swinging beneath thick-foliaged acacias in a Surrey | turn to gold. She had no children of her

garden, with the silver Thames speeding shining below the garden's terrace.

August was at its scorching height. In a word, summer reigned; but away, amid the trees of the garden, were some limes whose leaves were already falling, and a splash of scarlet beautified the luxurious trails of Virginian creeper.

"You incarnation of self-indulgence!" was the answering cry from the lad's sister, Car, or Caroline. "You-not to skate, not to go down to Harleigh for the

hunting-

"There, stop! The hunting is the only solace that winter brings - no summer beats that. Yet it's awfully jolly here."

"I wonder," the girl said, "whether they will bring us some tea here, or must we go in to aunt?"

The tinkling of a small hand-bell outside a lace-curtained French window gave the answer.

These two young people were the daughter and son of a certain Colonel Powell out in India. His wife had been dead since the birth of Doris, a younger girl. Doris inherited some delicacy of her mother's, and, as she happened to have caught a slight cold, the careful aunt, Mrs. Andrew Powell, kept her indoors, though it was August, and so hot.

As they all, the party of four, drank the fragrant tea, we will catalogue them. The two girls were marvellously alike - Car nearly twenty, and Doris with her seventeenth birthday past just a week agoand might have been taken for one another. Both were alight and tall brown maidens. Each wore her wavy brown hair atop of her head, and each one wore an Indiamuslin frock sent to them by their father. But there was a nameless something which at once told the secret and the care of Mrs. Andrew Powell. Car looked strong, while Doris's brown cheek was transparent. Mortimer was evidently a true Powell. Fair, of Saxon hue, he was as much like his aunt as a youth of eighteen can be like a woman of forty-five. Mrs. Andrew Powell —she had married her cousin—was harself a well-dressed, well-preserved lady; her cap was of the daintiest, and-wise womanshe knew that its Paris-fingered tinted lace made her look younger instead of older. She looked like a woman whose life had been an easy one. It had been so; her husband, the Colonel's brother, was a wealthy man; he had something to do with iron, and, somehow, iron does

own, so the Indian Powells had slipped into her motherly embraces quite comfortably.

Over tea they chatted. There was nothing, perhaps, to repeat in what they The sum and substance of the discourse came to be the discussion of Doris's declaration that she would go to a certain garden-party the following

"I shall only be too pleased, dear child, But whether that little to let you go. cough of yours will silence itself by tomorrow morning, remains to be seen.

"It is nothing;" and here, by way of emphasising its own power, the said cough

silenced Doris.

"Girls are such muffs! Can't you stay in for a day, so that you may go out for the rest of the summer ?" Mortimer asked lazily.

"Would you!"

"Wouldn't I! And a garden-party! Talk vapid stuff to a set of people you have never set eyes on before, and will never see again. Eat ices, and be expected to make up a set at tennis—tennis in August ! "

"Morte, you are a perfect Sybarite!"

Car laughed gaily.

"What's that? Don't make classical allusions unless you understand them. What is a Sybarite 1"

"You in the long vacation," was the

quick answer.

"When a fellow grinds, as this honourable person grinds, he is entitled to some little compensation."

Mortimer Powell was in for Indian

Civil Service exams.

Here a ringing of the house-bell signified an arrival.

"Uncle!" Doris said.

Yes. It was Mr. Andrew Powell, a tall man, with close-cut, iron-grey hair, who came into the pretty little garden-room.

"I have brought an enemy," he said

briskly.

He was a man who in anything like business had that alert manner, and yet when social enjoyment, the entertaining of guests, the reception of other folks' hospitality were the rulers of the hour, he had rather a lazy air, and people called him a "bit of an exquisite."

The said enemy was in the room by the time his introduction was spoken, and he

was-the doctor.

"I knew Doris was seedy, my dear," Mr. Powell said to his wife; "so, as Allen

and I met at the station, I brought him round."

Dr. Hugh Allen was a big, high-voiced man, fond of putting a show of lightness into his speech and manner, and so earning for himself a character for shallowness. There was no greater mistake.

Involuntarily his mouth fell into gravity as Mr. Powell's words made him look at Doris. But he spoke laughingly to her:

"Been reckless again, Miss Doris? Ah! I see. It will be a course of my nastiest physic for a week or so."

"There is nothing whatever the matter with me, Dr. Allen," Doris said stoutly.

She was the graver of the two sisters, and the most determined.

Doris would go to her garden-party, but she paid the penalty of a worse cough, and she found herself under the tyrannic mastership of the smiling doctor.

He said to her uncle and aunt that she must be taken away from English fogs; she must feel nothing but summer weather

for a year.

When September was beginning to energise the English air, Mortimer Powell ran down to Dover with "his people," and saw them off for the South.

"I envy you, Do," he said, "with your eternal summer. Think of me in the

fog, grinding."
"You'll get your 'Banks' scholarship," Doris said proudly.

" Maybe. We'll see."

Then the Empress gave her signal and non-voyagers went on shore, and voyagers stood waving handkerchiefs.

The Powells were going to Algiers.

CHAPTER II.

Our from the arched gateway in the long, white wall of one of the villas of El Biar, there had passed early in the morning four riders. It was early in November, but the air was what they had come The brilliant, elastic freshness to seek. of the early morning fought masterfully against the rapid advance of the scorching sun, and though the fire of the sun conquered, yet the wonderful electric vivacity of air remained.

The four had ridden far and wide. They had by that time learnt all the finest rides round Algiers; but even the least striking never could lose the vigour of semi-tropic vegetation, or the flashing colour of native

Doris Powell said she had "Quite forgotten she had been supposed to be invalidish." She rode ahead of the party of four; she always was ahead.

Car was the second lady-rider; the men were Mr. Powell and a neighbour, a young

Captain Beaufort.

Lady Beaufort went to Algiers every winter; her villa was just a step lower down the E! Biar hill than the one which Mr. Powell had secured for himself, was a picture of an English-Moorish house. The orange-garden touched the spiky cactushedge, which, in an aggressive wild fashion, marked the limits of the "To-be-let-furnished" villa which Mr. Powell had.

It was nearly midday—too hot to be out. The dust of the road was a cloud, and the cloud thickened as some dozen camels, with their Arab drivers, came slowly and silently along the main road which our four riders had just entered.

"I am fast losing all mystical reverence for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Doris said as she drew rein and let the others come up to her; "I quite believe they looked for all the world like these men. There! could there be a handsomer man or a grander than that one walking with the long staff! And, as they slightly love dirt now, I believe the people of the Bible pictures loved it too. Their dress is just the same, and I'm sure now the spic-and-span cleanliness of the children's pictures is simply a delusive trick of fancy."

She talked fast,

"This is Africa, and those folks lived in Asia," Car criticised.

"Did they? They tried Africa more

than once, I think."

Then they were following the long line of white wall in which was the door of Reis-el-Selim, the Beauforts' house. They had passed the camels and had become more dusty than ever in consequence. Following the dip of the road, they could see the shining blue of the Bay of Algiers, the massed houses of the white town, the faraway sweep of the Sahel Hills. All misty, all burning, and yet how invigorating was even the midday air! No wonder Doris had forgotten her invalidism.

The high green gate in the white wall was reached, and Captain Beaufort, lifting his hat, said, as one says to one's familiar acquaintance, "'Au revoir,' we shall see

you by-and-by."

"Yes, oh, yes," was Doris's answer for the party. Then they also went home.

The shelter of the cool, dim rooms was

grateful beyond speech. Car threw herself on a low, cushioned seat; the windows were shaded, but the scent of roses came in lusciously. From between two shadowing blinds there shot a golden arrow of sunlight, waking vivid colour from the dark carpets, flashing splendour from the steel and gold of an antique scabbard Mr. Powell had bought the day before, and had set against the white wall for decoration, and dashing scarlet fire from a bunch of huge-bloomed geranium set in a Kabyle pot upon a little table.

By that table there sat a visitor. Car had not seen that any one was in the room

-now she did see.

"Mademoiselle," the gentleman began.
"Ah!"—Car's exclamation cut him short—"it is M. Languébien; you have not then forgotten us!"

"That was not possible, mademoiselle.

And your sister, and your aunt?"

"They are all flourishing; but how is it you are alone? Has no one told aunt you are here? Have you been here long?"

These questions ran headlong one upon

another.

Now, on the journey from Marseilles it had so happened that an evilly-disposed wind, called mistral, had brought about the roughest of passages. Notwithstanding the luxury of the fine transatlantic steamer, for all the twenty-six hours of the crossing no one had appeared upon deck except Car Powell, and her uncle, and this M. Languébien.

France rules in Algeria; and M. Languébien was head of some government bureau going to his post. Friendships ripen fast in such rough circumstances, and it was an odd thing that, after those certain hours of excited intimacy, M. Languébien should never, during the month of their stay in

Algiers, have been up to the villa. There he was now, however.

Perhaps it is a long story to tell his reasons. Let them go. He could not help himself.

Mrs. Powell came in, and then Mr. Powell; and, the guest being invited to

lunch, Car disappeared.

"Did you not see him riding ahead of us as we came down the hill? I did," Doris said, "and as I felt sure of his society at lunch, I did not rush open-eyed into his den. Is he as ugly as ever?"

"Quite, I should say," Car answered coolly. "You are always saying this, Do; you never saw the man until we landed."
"Excuse me, I saw him in the full light

of the saloon lamps, until we were out of Marseilles harbour, and that horrible storm I do not think I admire Frenchmen." Silence for a moment or so. Then: "Sallow-hideously ugly."

"Do you think so ! I call him distinguished."

Lunch was over. The ladies had donned their pretty visiting garb, and all our friends-M. Languebien included-were leisurely threading the unkempt paths of the garden towards a smaller side gate, which was nearly opposite the entrance to the Beauforts'.

Over the white wall by the gate there hung bunches of pale-blue plumbago flowers, growing in seeming wildness; up the alley of entrance were ranked great bushes of the huge-blossomed, scarlet geranium, which, in November, lords it in all the El Biar gardens; round about a tiltshaded window over the big doorway there was growing a mass of bougainvillea.

Then, into the shadowy entrance-hall our party went; other visitors were also entering. One, a white-robed old Arab, with his son in jacket of green, with the finest of gold embroidery-work on breast Meeting them were some and arms English folks who had made their call, and

were coming away. It was Lady Beaufort's reception-day, and now that Sir Charles, the General, had been dead five years, her ladyship-the mother of seven sons-found life a most pleasant possession, and the society of fashionable life the most charming of

delights.

Her sons were scattered. Now and again one was with her wherever she happened to be; but her only family companion of any staying power was Madge Fitz-Gerald, her niece. Having come for three winters to Algiers, she knew every body—every body, that is, to whom "society" opened its

For perhaps five minutes the Powell party stood in the long, lovely, white room, which yet one forgot was white by reason of its rich, dark draperies. In that five minutes the young Arab talked to the ladies.

Young Arabs know very well the difference between European and Moslem notions about the rights of women; this one was becoming very Europeanised. He liked to be called "Monsieur."

Not so his father, the old Mahmoud Ben Ali Hadjadj. He was a Moslem of Mos-

lems, and his wives—of course he had the allotted number of four-were the most beautiful, but the most jealously secluded of all the wives of the great merchants of

Algiers.

The five minutes' chat was ended by Miss Fitz-Gerald coming and claiming Car and Doris for tennis. The sun was lowering, but yet there would be an hour before

the short twilight came and went:
"Car, dear," she cried, with her pretty, Irish touch of extravagance, "I'll simply die if you cannot play. Aline Thorne has just maddened me; she is limp as a rag. and, thanks be, has begged to sit out, 'if we can make up a court without her'!"

Here a little grimace set a fine meaning

on the repeated words.

"Who else is playing ?" Doris asked. "I! Is not that enough? No? Bevis

will play, but has not done so yet. He is exclusive in the matter of partners."

Bevis was Captain Beaufort, who, on leave from Egyption occupation, was with his mother.

Lady Beaufort was crossing the room towards some freshly-arrived guests. She was a woman of fifty, fat and fair; in politer phrase, she possessed a toss of marvellous golden hair; the white lace on it and her always black dress added to the striking character it gave her personality. She was round and plump, had been pretty, and was now what her niece, Madge, would infallibly become.

"Why did you not come earlier, girls?" she said with a manner which was very like Madge's manner. "How could tennis be had without you? I've not given a thought to it myself for fear of worrying

myself into my grave."

"She lets me do that," Madge put in. "I have had a mauvais quart d'heure."

"Go and play;" and Lady Beaufort shook a finger at the girls, and passed on.

The three obeyed; and as the young Arab had been by them he followed them, asking in his grave, courteous fashion for permission, asking about the game, asking like the deftest society man any question which could bring an answer from the fair English girls. Of course he, dark, and grave, and majestic, admired the fairest of the two; and Car was the fairest.

She was answering him gaily.

"You shall play, monsieur," she said. "Oh! I beg your pardon. It is not 'monsieur' I must say. What is it? Is it Bey? or Dey ? or what?"

"No, no-say, 'monsieur.' I like that,

and "-he waved his brown hand-"does it not come easily from the lips of mademoiselle 1"

He spoke French perfectly; he knew France; and the only lapse in his worldly wisdom was, that he, of Algeria, thought vaguely that France made the European world. However, he was young.

Henceforth his long string of names got simplified in Monsieur Hadjadj. He was introduced to the Captain, and that gentleman gave him instructions in the mysteries of tennis, hiding his chagrin at the spoiled

But lo! a young Arab is an athlete. It was no spoiled game. It was an exhibition

of perfect dexterity.

"You are a foe one likes to fight!" Beaufort said, wiping the perspiration from his face. "I never had such trouble in beating a man! You'll beat me the next

game.

"I will be pleased to try for that, M. le Capitaine. But, my resources are nothing. I do many things à la Européen; but, at my father's house, the old régime reigns. I shall never there make "-he opened his arms as if to embrace tennis-ground and garden at once-" like this."

Car laughed. "How we should spoil your lovely, still gardens! Fancy!" The girls had only a few days back seen a Moorish house, but it was not the house of this young Hadjadj. He was a new friend of

this day.

Beaufort was as grave as the Arab. said "No, it is here you must play. Come to-morrow."

"And the ladies?" Hadjadj bowed in

his majestic way to all the girls.

"We will not have them!" Beaufort cried. He made a great show of rejecting them. "No, they shall not learn all the secrets of the science. I will teach you! They may play with you, perhaps, this day week-then! they will see!"

"Is that right? Is that courteous? of

your manner ? "

"Yes," Doris nodded. "It's all right. They snub us when they like, though they talk about our 'rights.'" She shook her "All you have to do is to head at him. learn to win, and then when the game is won, you should bow and say it was the lady's skill that gained it."

Hadjadj smiled.

"Do I understand," he said. "Yes, I And "-here again he bowed with infinite grace and tact to the three-

Powells were Soon after this, the

summoned by their uncle.

When they left, M. Languébien left also; and, to bridge time quickly, in the following week that gentleman condoned any seeming neglect of his travelling friends; he was nearly every day riding up to El Biar. In that week, too, he took them over the two palaces of the Governor. The winter palace showed them an old Moorish house, and the summer one was the most luxurious of modern Moorishbuilt houses.

He was a small, dainty figure, this M. Languébien, polished, and of high culture; a diplomat to his very finger-tips; not young, nay, on the score of age he had nearly as many years as Mr. Powell, the For all that he was one girl's uncle, had. of those men who are never old in the

society of bright women.

CHAPTER III.

THE week for Hadjadj to practise tennis had gone by. Bevis Beaufort being the sort of man who acknowledges a master in nothing, had to confess that he was more than proud of his pupil—he was a mighty antagonist.

Beaufort held his own, but that was all. When the day for the girls' game came round, Beaufort meant that Doris should win, and Hadjadj meant that Car should be victor. He, with his Arab courtesy, and his Arab silence, took the other man's apportioning of partners, and simply bowed. It was as much as if he had said :

"You have spoken, my friend. It is

Kismet,"

But in the recesses of that silent soul of his he had a plan. Time would work it out. First, let him win the tennis game, and lay his laurels at the feet of Car.

That was exactly what he was doing when next we find him. The two girls in their white flannel tennis-dresses, the two men, one English, fair and ruddy in white too, the dark - skinned Arab, muscular as a bronze statue, in a white cotton suit of his own fancy, Arab-made, and with the inevitable sash of Arab use, of deepest crimson, round his waist. The suit was somewhat original in design; nevertheless, it was loose, and gave the limbs free play, as every Arab dress must do. The sun was just sinking; the "the lady who plays on my side shall win!" air was suddenly devoid of heat; and

Mrs. Powell was wrapping a shawl round Doris.

"I am utterly disgusted, Captain Beaufort!" Doris was saying. "It was

all my fault."

"Indeed! no. You could not have done better. The fellow has a magic. I knew what it would be directly I took him in hand. The muscle and the nerve—he is a splendid fellow!"

And this was the moment in which, as we have figuratively said, Hadjadj was laying his laurels at the feet of Car

Powell.

He was standing erect by her side, a light, yet grand figure. Car's face was flushed, naturally.

She was very gay over something; perhaps, over his grave courtesy; a little elate, as naturally, over her victory.

"But it was not my victory at all, monsieur. I tried to do my best, but how badly I played. You must be wonderfully strong—and so quick."

"We are trained—all boys are trained."
"You will not let me praise you!" the girl said with a sort of disappointment.

Car was a very tender-hearted girl, very kindly, staunch to her old friends, but yet making her new friends feel that she was also devoted to them.

One may be too kind.

Hadjadj caught her look. "Ah!" he cried hotly, "you mistake my wish. I express myself in a wrong manner. Your praise is like the sun in winter to me, and yet—yet, I am not worthy myself. I am but as a slave at the feet of mademoiselle."

This southern flourish of language was rather alarming to Car; the reality of the man's desire to do her honour could not be doubted for one moment, for his face was grave if his eyes were alight. At the same moment she felt one degree nervous, it was so unlike anything an English girl expects to hear. With a little shiver she let the matter drop, crying quickly, "How chilly it is! so funny that we should feel cold when it is really so hot. And the sun blazing only five minutes ago!"

"It is night, mademoiselle, the sun is set; soon the stars will awake, and the moon will arise, as the fair faces of the north arise to drive away the burning glances of the

maidens of the south !"

"Do get me a shawl!" Car was really quite uncomfortable. Her cheeks burned hotly; but how absurd. Of course Arabs would be likely to talk in that ridiculous

fashion. Not only her cheeks, but her white-robed self was rosy by this time, for the night of Hadjadj had not literally come, and the afterglow, the radiant crimson blush, was over all the sky, and warming all the earth and the brilliant flowers in the gardens into abnormal brilliancy.

M. Languébien came up with a shawl. He had seen Car's little shiver; he thought, too, that she had had enough of Moorish society. He took the opportunity cast into his lap, and possessing himself of a black lace shawl belonging to one of the spectators, he was by the girl's side at the very moment she

was wanting some one.

Her look of gratitude was enough to send the wise Jules Languébien's head whirling. However, his head never whirled, he deftly wound the shawl about Car's shoulders and said:

"It is so chilly. Mademoiselle should walk a little after so violent exertion. It

was a splendid game."

He somehow had Car's hand within his arm, and he was leading her along the garden-paths. Away from the visitors, too, and towards the house. He seemed to lead; nay! there was a moment after a general move behind these two. The event of the afternoon was over.

"It is chilly to me, too," he said, intuitively sure of her sympathy. He shrugged his shoulders lightly. "Will not a cup of Lady Beaufort's tea be welcome? It is an occasion when the tea of the English is nectar!"

"I really think it is," Car cried, full of relief. "That is—it will be when you get

me some."

On the following day a wonderful thing happened. A messenger bringing a letter to Mr. Powell from the merchant, Mahmoud Ben Ali Hadjadj, waited in splendid silence and dignity for an answer. The letter formally requested permission to call; a conversation on an important matter was desired.

Mr. Powell wrote a little note of answer. "He should be very pleased. He would

receive his guest on the following day at an early hour."

The old man came in state, riding a richly-caparisoned horse, and with an attendant.

The forms and the details must go by; here is the subject of the important conversation.

Would Mr. Powell give his niece, the

fairest of the English maidens, to be the wife of his son? The young Ahmed would die if his desire were retused. He was European in heart; he would take no second wife. He, the father, would pay as purchase-money, or dowry, whatever sum Mr. Powell would ask !

"We do not buy our wives!"

"No-no. It is another word, perhaps. I am rich. Ahmed is my heir; the son of my favourite wife. I will retire, and my English friend will send his answer. We can wait. Allah will grant it."

But the grand old Arab was given an

answer before he went.

He would not accept this.

"We can wait. It is well to be calm and wait," he said.

Did any one ever hear of such a thing? Doris laughed; but Car cried, because she was so kind a girl.

She wished she were at home again. Oh for next summer and the dear old Surrey home, and the village folks, and - the people she saw every day!

CHAPTER IV.

IT took some little while for the discomfort of this strange proposal to fade away. But it did fade away, and, very probably, will stand good as an anecdote of Algerian experience in the English society there some little time.

While the roughness of the experience lasted, Car disliked going out; but one day M. Languébien brought the news that young Ahmed Hadjadj had sailed for

France in that day's steamer.

Really M. Languébien was a treasure of a friend. So cool, so courteous, and calm, there seemed always where he was some essence of safety and assurance in the air. Did one desire to learn anything of Algeria, he was sure to be possessed of the desired information; did one fancy to make an excursion or to see anything peculiar to the country, which might be surrounded with some degree of quite rightful exclusiveness, he was the man to make all easy, and, by his long knowledge of the ways of the place and people, he was sure to be able to overcome every difficulty. And his willingness was as great as his power; he, in a word, made the wheels of sight-seeing run with perfect smoothness.

small blue iris of the fields, and the wild narcissus of the hills for decorations instead The unending of holly and mistletoe. summer of Mortimer Powell's desire at the opening of our story was assuredly a fact for his sisters.

For himself, they got news of his having as much hunting as his soul desired. He had forgotten that lazy outcry of his.

January went, and February; and when March was in, the Beauforts and Powells made a journey eastwards for a week or so, They saw ancient cities and Roman remains; they saw real Arab village life, and got, at Biskra, beyond the lines of railway and civilisation. They had a glimpse of desert, and they saw palms, and monkeys, and the mirage, knocking about and facing real roughnesses of travel which even M. Languébien could not civilise away.

He went on the excursion with them. And why ! Had he not the work of his bureau, which you would expect might

have kept him busy in Algiers?

Yes; he had all this. But he had trained his subordinates well, and he took the week-nay, it was really an absence of ten days.

Girls will joke, and the Powell girls saw fit to tax Madge Fitz-Gerald with being the

cause of this holiday.

"Pouf!" she cried. "I'd have nothing to say to such a withered bundle of parchment! Besides, don't you know my lover is over the seas ?"

She tossed her head, and flourished her hand out to where the blue Bay of Algiers lay shining and almost motionless in the heat.

"What?" Car Powell said quickly, with as quick a blush.

Why should she blush? Her sympathy

must be ultra acute.

"Don't you believe me ! Is not a lover across the seas possible? I do not fancy an Arab, or a poitrinaire. All the men who come here are poitrinaires."

"Thanks," her cousin Bevis said.

He stretched his tall, muscular figure in physical scorn.

"You! You are nobody. You only

come on duty."

"Thanks again - awfully." Then he looked glum all at once. "The duty that bothers me is the 'duty' of getting away.
Two weeks more—no more."
"Wae's me!" Madge mocked, poking

her handkerchief into her laughing eyes.

We go in April," "When is April? Christmas went by, with roses, and the Doris said, with a fine parade of ignorance.

"April comes in less than two weeks. I shall see you off," Beaufort said triumphantly.

"You are flattering." Doris in this

made as wild a show of coquetry.

And then there was a something in the Captain's manner which made Doris quiet, and was altogether so marked that even Madge was at a loss for a sharp word. After a silence that could be felt, a silence of perhaps half a second, she set one hand energetically within Car's arm, and said:

"Come into my den with me; it will be cool there if anywhere, and we will decide about M. Languébien and the lover across

the seas."

Events were coming to a climax. That day brought a proposal from Captain Beaufort to Doris, an interview with her uncle, and a general settlement of matrimonial prospects for those two of our young friends.

Doris would not know an English winter for a long while. After an English summer, and a wedding, she would probably go to Egypt. But, yet, who knows how or where a soldier will be

ordered ?

Madge Fitz-Gerald and Car had their talk we must suppose, but there remains

the doubt as to the subject of it.

That evertful day were on to its radiant close. Our English friends had gone to Algieroin the season of the harvest of oranges. Now the spring was well in, scorchingly in, and the orange gardens were a mass of white bloom, and everywhere the air was scented with the delicious odour of the orange-flowers.

In the cool of the evening the girls were walking along the flowery alleys of Lady Beaufort's gardens, talking of the coming start for home. The day had had a secondary event, for Mr. Powell had fixed day and hour for leaving.

M. Languébien would cross to France with the Powells, as he had come from France with them. He had business in

Paris he said.

"It is rather much !" Car Powell laughed

with Madge.

"It has opened my eyes, me darling!"
Madge cried. "I'll be dancing at your
wedding, and all the while ye've been
poking your fun at me. But I'll never
be minding one bit. You're a sweet!"

Even Irish effervescence need not have called for the hug Madge gave Car, neither did it call for the shine in Madge's bright

blue eyes.

"Oh! don't say that. It could never be. I never dreamt of such a thing. How thankful I shall be to get home."

Car was pale.

Then an Arab servant came out from the lamp-lit room above the garden, to say that

"Coffee is served, and milady wishes the young ladies to come in. Il fait froid, mesdemoiselles," the man added for himself, shrugging his sun-loving shoulders.

Not many days after, the good steamer Charles Quint steamed out of Algiers Bay with the Powells on board. They stood, heedless of the scorching glare of the sun which burnt through any shelter of any umbrella. They were waving handker-chiefs to the Beauforts, who were on the Quay; they could see, by-and-bye, Captain Beaufort detach himself from the ladies, and then he became a speck in a tiny boat, being rowed out to his smaller steamer going Egypt way.

Then no person could be distinguished, and they all looked—as people do at places they may never see again—at the white Arab town, and the dazzling white Grand Mosque, and the minaret with the clock.

These also faded, and there was only the sweep of the bay, and the hills, and a mist of radiant light melting the snows of Djurdjura.

CHAPTER V.

M. LANGUEBIEN was not on board the steamer with the Powells. He changed his passage to the day following. The fact was, he had been quietly working in his diplomatic fashion, meaning to make his coup and win. There are, however, some few matters which no arch-plotter can control, and though M. Languébien's desires were decidedly more honourable and worthy than to be stigmatised as plotting, yet his quiet and silent way of working tempts the word.

He saw that an English wife, such an English wife as Car Powell would make, would give a character and distinction to such a household as he contemplated for

himself in the near future.

But no. Fate, as represented by Car,

was against him.

So he did not travel with them; but, being cool, and, above all, meaning to distinguish himself in his political work, this contretemps only delayed his journey to Paris by one day.

The Powells, on landing at Marseilles, went on to Cannes for some few weeks, so as to avoid the chancy spring weather of England.

June was in. English summer was round again, the roses were in the hedges, and huge rose blooms were filling a bowl on the table in the morning-room at the Powells.

Long ago, Mortimer Powell had won his "Banks" scholarship; he was up for a week from Oxford for some one or other of his Civil Service examinations. He was just off to town for the ordeal.

"I'll throw an old shoe after you, Morte," Doris called as he went out.

"Ay, do. I've got to beat a Hindoo at Sanskrit to-day—an old shoe might be of service. Where's Car?"

"Out-somewhere."

She was walking from the gate with Dr. Allen's partner. Both turned and saw Mortimer off, then turned again, and leisurely strolled up the drive.

Dr. Beatoun laughed.

At what ?

"You need not ridicule it—he meant it!" Car cried, laughing too.

"And the Frenchman too!" Again the big, fair-haired young Scot laughed.

"And to think that Madge nearly discovered! No, not discovered, but might have discovered."

"Why? How?"

"She has a wild way of talking sometimes, and one day she talked about 'a lover across the seas.' I know I went scarlet."

Car was rosy as she spoke.

"Fine! But what danger I was running! Why did I not speak to your uncle before you went? Still, I was a poor man—"

"As if it mattered whether you spoke or not! What do you think I am?" She here shook his arm as if she meant to show anger.

"What? You are mine-safe."

So here we end. The lover across the seas was real for Car; but nothing more than a flash of Madge Fitz-Gerald's sprightly tongue for herself. She married M. Languébien after all, and will for a while spend a good deal of her time in Algiers. But who can say to what a French diplomat will not rise?

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CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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WHAT BECAME OF MR. BLIND-WEED.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

Now, then, what are you hanging about here for? You want Mr. Thomas Blindweed ? Well, what do you want with him? To see him on a little bit of business. Oh 1 Is it anything Because I've had enough worriting ? worry to last me a pritty long time, and if you're going to add to it, the sooner you cut your stick the better I shall like it. You ain't come to worry me. You only want to hear the true story of the inquest -Mr. Blindweed's inquest, it's got to be called-and anything else I've a mind to tell you. You mean by that, I suppose, that you want to know all about me? You're modest, you are! Why, I've never set eyes on you till this minute. Ware you, if I may make so bold? descriptive writer. What, for shop windows? No? What for, then? Newspapers and magazines, eh? Ah, you want to put me into print. Well, I've no objection, so long as I'm paid for it. And if I am put into print, and if my beautiful wife happens to read what I tell you, it may do her a power of good. You're willing to pay me! How much? According to what I tell you. My time's precious—suppose we say so much a minute. What do you offer? A penny a minute. Won't do. Tuppence. That's better.

to the hour—a hundred and twenty pence—ten bob. To patter away at that rate ten hours a day—ten tens—five pound nought. But on second thoughts, it'd be wearing to the tongue—mightn't be able to keep up the steam. I'll strike a bargain. Thrippence a minute I'll take, and no less. I reckon six minutes gone already. You don't mind? Well, that's handsome of you. It's just twelve o'clock, and I'll take ten bob on account. Thank you. Easy to know a gentleman when you see one.

You don't object to a bit of personal history, I hope, because it's necessary in what I'm going to tell you. My beautiful wife is out, and won't interrupt us. When she's out there's peace in the house; when she's in, there ain't. But she's beginning to discover that I'm master here, as a man and a husband ought to be. I give her a scare lately it'll take her some time to recover from. You'll hear about that.

I must commence a little way back. Three years ago, my wife — Molly's her name — was a rare handsome piece of goods, and, to do her justice, she was aware of it. She's showing signs of wear and tear now; and she ain't half the figger she was. I'm continually cautioning her about it, and I think she'll take heed of what I say, because if there's one thing more than another she's vain of, it's her good looks.

"Molly, my dear," I says to her, "your

suppose we say so much a minute. What do you offer? A penny a minute. Won't do. Tuppence. That's better. Let's make a calculation. Sixty minutes "Molly, my dear," I says to her, "your face is falling in, your nose is turning red, your mouth is losing its pritty curves, your eyes ain't got half the shine in 'em they used to have, and your figger, Molly—not

to put too fine a point upon it — your figger's gitting scrimpy. If you don't bring that temper of yourn more under control, in a year or two you'll be no better than a

bag of bones."

It's temper, guv'nor, more than anything else, that alters a woman's looks. If they could be got to understand that, they wouldn't be so vinegary. Well, as I was saying, when Molly was single she was a perfect beauty, and lots of chaps was wild after her, me among the rest. I don't deny it. I was mad in love with her pritty face and shining eyes, and her pleasant mouth that I thought butter wouldn't melt in. But it will, guv'—I've found that out long ago. In the days I'm speaking of, she wouldn't look at me—turned up her nose whenever I spoke to her.

"I ain't good enough for you, I sup-

pose," says I to her.

". Not by a long way," says she to me. Why wasn't I? Because I was a working carpenter, making about twentyfive bob a week. That was as much as Dick Pawson was making; but then she was sweet on him, and wasn't on me, which made all the difference, and didn't show her sense. A slim kind of chap, Dick Pawson; curly hair, little feet, a face like a wax dummy, could dance in the latest fashion-ah! that was a powerful bait for Molly. As they went round and round in the Dancing Academy—where I used to go sometimes to keep my eye on her—he looked like a dying duck in thunder. He was a shop-walker in a haberdasher's shop. A regular lady's man. Not a bit of stamina in him. I could throw three of him in the air, and play ball with them. I told him so once, and offered to fight him with one hand, but he sniggered, and refused, and says I to Molly:

"Call the likes of him a man! Why,

he ain't got a backbone!"

But that didn't set her against him. The more I run him down, the better she thought him. It's the way of women, guv'.

"You won't have me?" says I.

"No," says Molly, "I won't have you; and I won't have any man unless he can keep me like a lady."

"Can Dick Pawson do that?" I asks.
"When he gits a shop of his own, he

can," she answers.

One great thing against me was that I choice? No; I knowledge to fall on my nose, and bring my partner make a lady of her.

to grief. Now Molly was dancing mad; she'd loll and languish in Dick Pawson's arms, and go round and round the Academy -admission tuppence; ladies free; cloakroom a penny; light refreshments on the premises at moderate prices—for an hour and more; and when the music stopped, and she was obliged to, you thought she could never git back her breath it come that short. But what did that matter to Molly? Breath or no breath, round and round she'd go, casting her eyes up at the ceiling with a look that couldn't have been more egstatic if she'd been floating among angels. And Dick Pawson'd come up to me, simpering and sniggering, and say :

"What a pity you can't dance, Mr.

Blindweed!"

Well, Molly kept flirting away with this one and that one, but most of all with Dick Pawson, and never with me, till something occurred that astonished me as much as it astonished her and everybody else. I gits a letter one day from a lawyer chap, and on the envelope I'm called, "Thomas Blindweed, Esqerwire." Now, that was unusual; so was the letter. I was to call on the lawyer chap as soon as possible, to hear something to my advantage. I went, you may take your oath on it, and I did hear something to my advantage. There was a brother of mine that I'd lost sight of for I don't know how many years. to America. Made money there, and was buried without leaving a will behind him. As he was a single man and I was his only relation, his money was mine. All I had to do was to prove that I was Thomas Blindweed, Esqerwire, brother to Nicholas Blindweed, Esqerwire, who lived and died in America. Says the lawyer chap :

"It's all right, Mr. Blindweed. Leave the matter in my hands, and I'll make

things anug for you."

He did, and made things snug for himself by handing me a bill of costs. It made me stare, but it was no use fighting against it. I got what was left. It wasn't to be sneezed at. A matter of fifteen hundred

pounds.

I bought myself a new suit of clothes, from top to toe, and I walked up and down in front of Molly's house, with a flower in my coat, lavender-coloured kidgloves on my hands, and a shiny bell-topper on my head. And, what was more, I smoked a cigar instead of a pipe. From choice? No; I knew what I was about. Molly wanted to marry a man that would make a lady of her.

"I'm quite well, Mr. Blindweed," says

she, casting down her eyes; " and how are

you ?" " I'm blooming," says I.

Now, thought I, what shall I do with my money? Start a business, and lose it in twelve months? Set up a carriage, and spend it in six ? Or go to the races, and drop it in a week? "Do a sensible thing, Tom," says I to myself. "Inwest it, and make it bring you in so much a week for the rest of your natural Then there'll be no occasion for you to work any more." I don't mind telling you, guv'nor, I ain't fond of work; I like to smoke my pipe without being ordered about. So, after considering how to inwest, I come to the conclusion that houseproperty was the very identical. I bought a terrace of four houses down Mile End way, and after deducting for taxes and repairs, and making allowances for the time that some of 'em 'd be empty, I reckoned that I could safely depend on an income of thirty-two bob a-week. Independent of what my terrace cost me I had a matter of a hundred pounds or so to play with, and work my point - which was

Of course the news flew about. wasn't fifteen hundred pounds I was worth, it was fifteen thousand. It wasn't a terrace of four houses I'd bought, it was houses all over London that I was master of. The next time I meets Molly it was in everybody's mouth, and she looks at me, and I looks at her, and I lifts my shiny belltopper in a fashionable way, and bows to her, and then I passes on. I'd practised that hat and bow business before the looking-glass for hours and hours till I was perfect. She meets me again the next day, does Molly, and this time she stops and

Molly.

"I hope you're not gitting proud, Mr. Blindweed."

And she offers me her hand, and lets me hold it as long as I like, and smiles as sweet as honey straight in my face, and I

"Proud, Miss Molly, and to you! Not me, miss! Though things have changed, and I'm no longer obliged to work for a

living."

"I'm so glad, Mr. Blindweed," says Molly, sweeter than ever. "But you used to call me Molly."

"I didn't know," says I, " that it mightn't

be considered a liberty."

"A liberty, Mr. Blindweed!" says she. "Oh, no. I shall be very pleased if you'll call me Molly, as you used to do."

"Well, then, Molly," says I, "how are

you ?"

And there we stands, Molly and me, her hand in mine, and her eyes looking up and down, and her boozom swelling and palpitating to that degree that it looked for all the world as if it was being worked by steam-power. I was gone, sir, dead gone! She was a beauty, and no mistake. There She was a beauty, and no mistake. wasn't a woman within a mile of us that could hold a candle to her.

"Will you take my arm, Molly?"

says I.

"Yes, Mr. Blindweed," says she, "if you please.

Oh, how meek and sweet she was !

"If I'm to call you Molly," says I, " you mustn't call me Mr. Blindweed.'

"What must I call you?" says she.

"Call me Thomas," says I.

Then she says, "Thomas!" so soft that I had to put my head down to hear it, quite close to her mouth, and her breath was as sweet as voilets. I'd never been so close to her mouth before, and it set my heart beating like one o'clock.

Well, sir, we walked up and down the street, arm-in-arm, for an hour, and people stared at us. And who should we meet but Dick Pawson? He comes up and

"Good morning, Molly."

But Molly tosses up her head at him, and says, as cold as ice: "Good morning,

"Sir," he cries, quite flabbergasted.

"Oh, Molly!"

"Don't take liberties with my name," says Molly, "and I'll trouble you to keep your distance, and to speak when you're spoke to."

Away goes Dick Pawson, with a flea in

"I could never abear him," says Molly. "Couldn't you, Molly?" I says, thinking what a fool I'd been ever to think

different. "Never," says Molly. "Why, he's as thin as a shaving!" Presently she says to

me, "Thomas," she says.
"Yes, Molly," says I to her.

"It's such a long time since I've been to a theaytre!"

"Would you like to go to one ?" says L

"I would," says she.

"With me, Molly ?" says I.

"I shouldn't enjoy it with nobody else," says she.

"If it's quite agreeable," says I, "will you go to-night?"

"Oh, Thomas !" says she.

I didn't take her to see a tragedy, but something as would make us laugh; and I didn't take her to the pit, but the boxes. And there we set so close together that I felt as if I was in the Garden of Eden. She looked beautiful, I'll say that of her. She was the prittiest girl in the whole theaytre, and she laughed so much that she had to ketch hold of me to keep from tumbling off her seat, and the more she caught hold of me the more I liked it. There was a dark scene in the play that I wished had lasted three times as long. When we come out of the theaytre, as happy as a pair of birds in spring, I says:

"Molly, what do you say to a bit of supper ?"

"If you please, Thomas," says she.

We went to a restaurong, and had lamb chops, fried potatoes, and port wine, and before we'd finished supper she was calling me Tom. When we come out of the restaurong I says:

"Shall we walk or ride?

night."

She looks up and says: "How bright the stars are, Tom !"

And I says, pressing her arm close: "Yes, they are, Molly."

And she says, cuddling up to me:

"We'll walk, Tom.

So we walked, and before we'd gone half-a-mile, I asked her plump whether she'd have me, and she said she would. We had a lot of kisses in a quiet street; there was a policeman a long way off, but he didn't take particular notice of us, egscept, I dare say, to wish that he was in my place; and I says:

"Molly, I've loved you long."

"Tom, dear," she says, "I've loved you ever since I first set eyes on you."

"You didn't show it, Molly," says I. "I didn't want to look bold, Tom," she

And I was spoons enough to believe it! In a month from that time we was married. A slap-up wedding, with a coach and two horses, driver with white bows, Molly's family smart and spruce, Molly herself a picture, and a regular spread afterwards at the Royal George. Everything passed off splendidly, and then we took a tour to Gravesend, and spent our honeymoon there. "I've got a prize," thinks I to myself, and it really seemed so, guv'nor. Molly was as good as gold, and when we

come back there was these two rooms ready furnished for us. Molly didn't say anything at first, but I saw she was a little put out; she let a week go by, and then she says:

"Tom," she says, "we oughtn't to live in rooms; we ought to have a nice house

of our own."

"Rooms are good enough for me, Molly," says I "and what's good enough for me ought to be good enough for you.

"Why, of course it is, Tom," says she,

but think of the neighbours.'

"Why should I think of 'em ?" says I, "They're beginning to talk already," says she.

"Are they ?" says I. "What about ?"

" About us living here," says she. "What's that to them ?" says I. 'em to mind their own business."

"But, Tom," says Molly, coaxing like.

"Well, Molly," says I.

"When we're so rich," says Molly, "that we can afford to live in style, what reason is there why we shouldn't ?"

"How rich do you think we are ?"

says I.

"You've got hunderds of houses, haven't you?" says she.

" Only "Not by a long way," says I. four-little 'uns.'

"Only four little 'uns!" she cries.

"That's all," I answers.

"But you could buy more if you liked,"

says she.

"No, I couldn't," says I, "unless they'd sell 'em to me at about a bob a time. inwested all my fortune in them four houses, and a very tidy fortune it is."

"Yes, Tom," says she, "fifteen thousand

pounds at least."

"Oh, no," says I, "not quite fifteen hunderd, and they bring me in thirty-two bob a week."

She was regularly took aback at this, and a matter of three or four days passed before she spoke of it again. Then she says:

"If we've only thirty-two shillings a

week to live on, Tom-"Which," says I, "is all we have got."

"Then you ought to go to work, Tom,"

says she.

"Not me," says I. "I'm quite satisfied with the way we're living, and I ain't fond of work. Now, Molly," says I, "don't you go running your head against brick walls; you'll come off second best if you do. can be happy and comfortable if you don't act contrairy; if you do act contrairy, we shall be the other thing."

Then, guv'nor, she begins to cry and

Charles Dickens.

storm, and says that I deceived her. "How's that, Molly ?" says I.

"Didn't you make me believe," says she, "before you married me that you had fifteen thousand pounds and hunderds of houses ?"

"No, I didn't," says I. "I never said a word about it, and you never asked me."

"But it was in everybody's mouth,"

"That ain't my business," says I. "If people will talk, they must talk. I advise you again, Molly, don't you go and act contrairy. We've got along all right up to now, and we can keep along all right if

you've a mind to."

But she hadn't got a mind to. From that minute she begun to change, and instead of making things pleasant and comfortable, she nagged and nagged to that degree that she almost drove me wild. I tried to bring her to reason, but it wasn't a bit of good. She kept on crying that I'd deceived her, and that I ought to go to work, so that she might have silk dresses and plush hats and things, and she turned the place into a perfect bear garden. one night, when I'd kept out a bit for peace and quietness, I opened the door of our setting-room, and there was Dick Pawson in my chair, smoking my pipe, and drinking out of my glass. I remembered then that I'd told Molly that I shouldn't be home till eleven or twelve o'clock, and that was why Dick Pawson was making himself so comfortable; he didn't egspect me. It cut me a bit, I'll say that, guv'nor, to see Molly looking as bright and pleasant as she used to do when she was fishing for me.

"Dick Pawson," says I, very stern,

"what brings you here?"

"I invited him," cries Molly, defiant

"Oh, did you?" says I. "But it happens that I'm master in this place, and nobody comes here unless I ask 'em."

"I'll have anybody here I like to have,"

says Molly.

"We'll see about that," says I. "I'll settle with you presently, Molly. First, I've got to settle with Dick Pawson. Stand up, mate."

He was very white; and when I pulled him on his feet he was shaking

like a jelly.

"Now, look here, Dick," says I. "I ain't going to ask you questions, I'm only is the first time I've caught you in my house; if I ketch you here again, you shall remember it. And so that you may keep it in mind, take this "-I gave him one in the eye—"and this"—I gave him one in the mouth—"and this"—I gave him one on the nose-"and now, hook it!"

He didn't want telling twice; he was off like a shot. Then Molly and me had a scene—the hottest one yet. She stamped and screamed, and threw things about, and wound up by throwing herself on the floor and pretending to faint. She soon come to, though, when I doused her with a jug

of cold water.

She didn't speak to me for a week after that, and I didn't speak to her. We had to have our meals together, and had to sleep together, but otherwise we might have been strangers. She served me out finely, I can tell you. She ain't at all a bad cook, ain't Molly, but she took a pleasure now in spoiling everything she put on the table. I like my steak underdone; she burnt it to a cinder. I like my chops well done; she hardly warmed 'em. I like my eggs boiled three minutes and a half; she And when we had boiled 'em ten. potatoes they were like bullets. After a bit we spoke again, of course; but it was nothing but sulk, sulk, sulk, and cry, cry, cry, from morning to night. At last I thought it might do Molly good if I gave her a taste of single blessedness.

"Molly," says I, "you ain't the woman

I took you for."

"And you're not the man," says she, firing up, "I took you for."
"Sorry for it," says I, "but I'm the same as I ever was—and ever shall be, Molly; bear that in mind. I'm free to confess you're wearing me out, and I'm going away a bit for a rest."

"Good riddance to bad rubbish," says

I packed up a little bag of clothes, and after breakfast the next morning I got up, all ready to go.
"I'm off, Molly," says I.

"Won't you take me with you?" says

"I won't take you anywhere with me," says I, "till you give up being contrairy." "Where are you going," says she, "and

how long will you be gone?"

"I ain't made up my mind," says I. "I shall go somewhere into the country for peace and quietness, and I shall be gone just as long as I please. You shall have going to give you a bit of a warning. This ififteen bob a week to live on while I'm away, and when I come back I hope to find you another woman."

I waited a minute or two, to see whether she'd say anything kind, and whether she'd offer to kiss me; but she didn't speak or move, so I just says: "Ta-

ta, Molly," and off I went.

I didn't go fur away, but I went where I wasn't known, and found a farmhouse where they had cocks and hens, and pigs, and three cows, and a horse and cart, and where they lodged and boarded me for ten bob a week. It was so quiet there, and so pleasant with the animals and children, that I regularly enjoyed myself. Why I give a name that wasn't my own I can't tell you; I think it must have been because I didn't want Molly to come after me. Before I left London I got an agent to collect my rents, and wrote on a paper that he was to give Molly fifteen bob a week, and no more, and was to put the rest in the Post Office Savings Bank in my name. I put in a pound myself before I went away, and gave 'em my signature, so that no one could take it out but me.

Well, guv'nor, I did enjoy myself at that farmhouse, and I stopped there six months, and let my beard grow. I had always shaved clean, and when I looked at myself in the glass and saw my face covered with hair, I give you my word I didn't know it was me. I was another man, and what with taking another name, I almost felt as if I wasn't Thomas Blindweed at all. "Molly won't know me when I git back," thinks I. "What a game it'd be to pass myself off for another feller!"

Why did I keep away so long ? Well, to give her a regular dose. I thought of her a good deal, and looked at her picture that I'd brought away with me, and I did feel a bit soft sometimes. I'd no fear of Molly doing what wasn't right; she'd be as good as gold if it wasn't for her temper. In the six months I was away I got regularly fond of a country life, and I thought how pleasant it'd be for me and Molly to live there, with fowls, and pigs, and cows, and a horse and cart. I don't despair yet of bringing her to my way of thinking.

Well, guv'nor, when the six months was up I thought I'd go home and have a look at my wife, so I packed up my duds, and off I set. I mustn't forget to tell you that there'd been a big railway accident two days before I started

I took a last look at myself in the

known me. "Molly will be surprised!" thinks I.

I was glad to git back, and as I got nearer and nearer to Molly I got fonder and fonder of her. Well, when I was in this neighbourhood I saw a lot of people I knew, but not one of 'em knew me, I was that changed. I passed the Royal George, where we had our wedding-party, and there was a little crowd outside.

"What's up, mate?" says I to a man, disguising my voice, speaking husky like.

"An inquest," says he. "Whose inquest?" says I.

" Tom Blindweed's," says he. "Oh," says I, "Tom Blindweed's. Is he dead, then?"

"Killed in the railway accident," says

"I'm sorry to hear that," says I.

"So am I," says he. "Tom wasn't a bad sort."

I thought I'd go in and attend my own inquest, and see how it was gitting on. It ain't often a man gets a chance like that,

and it tickled me rather. So in I went.
It was all right. There was the coroner, there was the jury, there was the witnesses, and, among the witnesses, Molly and Dick Pawson. According to what they said, and what everybody else said, I was dead and no mistake. Eight men had been killed in the railway accident-me among 'em. My face had been cut about; but there was my height, there was my build; and, what was really curious, there was my finger and toe. If you'll look at the little finger of my right hand you'll see the leavings of an old cut on the knuckle, that gives the finger a peculiar shape. I can't hold it straight. Similarly, the big toe of my left foot is bent right under, just as though it was cut in half. The man that was found, and that nobody came forward to own but Molly, had just those marks on the same finger and toe; and that, and my long absence, and my height, and my build, settled the whole matter. I heard my wife's evidence—I was dead. I heard Dick Pawson's evidence—I was dead. The verdict clinched it. I listened, and didn't say a word.

I went out—rather dazed I must confess -not quite knowing now whether I'd any right to be alive. I'd take time to think over it, I thought. A week or two, more or less, didn't matter much to a dead man. Right opposite my two rooms there was a room to let, and from the window of that My own mother wouldn't have room I could see everything that passed in

the home that had been mine when I was alive. I took the room, and sat the best part of the day at the winder. My wife went in and out. People talked to her, and con-I ain't going to do her an soled her. She didn't look overjoyed. "Under the circumstances, Molly," thought I, "you're behaving becoming, and I must say you make a good-looking widder."

Charles Dickens.]

I suppose it was half-past nine at night when I saw a man go to Molly's rooms-Then an idea came into Dick Pawson. my head. I thought it out, and waited. Ten o'clock. Dick Pawson didn't come out. Half-past ten. Dick Pawson was still with Molly. I went into the street, crossed the road, and let myself into the house with my old latch-key that I'd always kept about me. Our two rooms both opened on to the passage. The first room was our living-room, the second our bedroom. I stepped very softly, and tried the handle of the bedroom. It turned; the door was unlocked. I went in.

Between that room and our living-room was a door, and I listened at it. Dick Pawson and my wife was talking. There was no light in the passage, there was no light in the bedroom; but there was a light in the setting-room. I peeped through. There was Dick Pawson, setting where I'd seen him last—in my chair, smoking my pipe, and drinking out of my glass. He was on one side of the table, Molly on the other. All correct and proper.

It made my blood boil to see Dick Pawson, setting there so comfortable. wasn't that he looked delighted; his face was serious enough; but it was that he looked so comfortable, and seemed so very much at home.

"Wait a bit, Dick Pawson," thinks I. Then I fixes my eyes on Molly, and I was glad to see that she was downcast and sad, and that she often wiped her eyes with her handkerchief. I got a little calmer. It did me a power of good every time she wiped her eyes—not sham tears, real 'uns.

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"She's sorry I'm dead," thinks I Knowing the room so well, I knew where everything was. I felt about for the bellers, and found 'em. I felt about for the matches, and found 'em.

"Now we'll have a game," thinks I; and it was as much as I could do to keep myself from laughing out loud.

Their backs was partly turned to the door between the rooms. Molly's face was hid in her handkerchief; Dick Pawson's face was hid in the glass of liquor. Very

softly I opened the door, slid in, and with one puff of the bellers, blew out the candle. Although I say it, it was neatly and cleanly done. We were all in the dark the minute I was in the room, and neither Molly nor Dick Pawson had caught sight of me. For all they knew I might have been a shadder.

"Oh 1" cries Molly.

"Oh!" cries Dick Pawson.

Both in a breath.

"How dare you blow out the light?" cries Molly. "How dare you?"

"Brayvo, Molly!" thinks I.

"I didn't blow it out," says Dick Pawson.

"Who did, then," says Molly, "if you didn't ?

"I don't know," says Dick Pawson. heard him feeling about for the matches. "It must have been the wind."

"It wasn't the wind," says I, speaking very solemn and low, in my natural voice.

Dick Pawson's teeth chattered in his head, and he dropped the box of matches on the floor. Molly gave a long "O-O-Oh!" and fell back in her chair. I'd come out of the dark into the light, and when I was in the dark again I could see better than they could.

"I'll tell you who put it out," says I. "It was the ghost of poor Tom Blindweed. I'm him! Don't move, don't scream, or something dreadful 'll happen to you! Molly, you know my voice, don't you?"

"Y-y-y-es," says Molly, in a whisper. "I'm dead, you know," says I. "I'm a ghost, and I'll haunt you morning, noon, and night, to your dying day if you don't answer me true. Speak, Molly, speak."

All the time I spoke I kept my voice very soft and solemn,

"What do you want of me?" says Molly

"To speak true," says I.

"I will, I will !" says Molly.

"I went away from you," says I. was wrong of me, but I couldn't stand the life you led me. Didn't I treat you kind, Molly ?"

"You did, you did!" says Molly.

"Call me Tom, dear Tom!" says I. "It'll do me good, though I am a ghost."
"Dear Tom!" says Molly. "Oh,

shall go off, I know I shall!"

"Not yet," says I. "In a minute you can, but you must answer me first. Did I ever raise my hand against you ?"

" Never, never!" she gasps. "Say dear Tom," says I.

"Yes, dear Tom!" says Molly,

"But you tried me hard, Molly," says I, "and I had to go. Was it my fault that I had fifteen thousand pound instead of fifteen hunderd? Ain't thirty-two bob a week enough for any reasonable woman? I wanted to be a happy man. You wouldn't let me. I wanted to live a quiet life. You wouldn't let me. I never loved but you, Molly, I never loved but you!"

She was sobbing and shaking so that I couldn't help pitying her, but I had to

carry it out to the end.

"I didn't go running after other men's wives!" says I. "I was true to you, Molly. All the time I was away I was thinking of you and nobody else. I was all alone in the country. I didn't go sneaking after women, married or single, as some pupples do! Says I to myself, 'I'll keep away from Molly a bit; I'll give her time to git over her sulks; perhaps she'll come round; perhaps she won't nag so; perhaps she'll try to make the best of things; perhaps she'll be sorry not to have me with her. It is lonely, ain't it, living all alone, with no one to love and take care of you? You was sorry, Molly, wasn't you?'

"Y-y-yes, dear Tom!" says Molly. "And you did wish me back, didn't

you ?" says I.

"Y-y-yes, dear Tom!" says Molly.

"But not as I am, Molly, not as I am," says I, and I waved my hand, which I'd rubbed over quietly with the tips of the matches. When Molly saw the blue light, she give a scream, and fainted dead away. I let her be. It wasn't the first time she'd fainted before me, and I knew she'd come

"Now, you," says I, to Dick Pawson, "you mean sneak, to come after a dead man's wife before he's in his grave! I told you the next time I caught you in my house you should remember it. You shall! What do you think of that, for a ghost?"

And I hit him hard one side of his head, and then hit him harder on the other, to set him right. He was too frightened to squeal; all he did was to tremble and shake. Then I jumped on him, and dragged him by the neck out into the passage. All the time I had hold of him I punched him and kicked him. I blacked his eyes, I set his nose bleeding, I loosened some of his teeth, and I wound up by kicking him from the street door into the gutter. He picked himself up, and ran off, howling.

I went back to Molly. She was still laying on the ground. I lifted her up, carried her into the next room, laid her on the bed, and waited in the dark till I heard her coming to. Then I slipped away, and stole out of the house.

The next day it was all over the neighbourhood that Tom Blindweed's ghost had appeared to Dick Pawson and Molly, and had given Dick Pawson a beating that'd make him sore for a month. It got into the papers, and I read about it. funny the things the paper said. There was letters from people who believed in ghosts, and who told all sorts of stories of what had happened to them, and their mothers, and grandmothers. The fellers mothers, and grandmothers. that call theirselves spiritualists wrote columns and columns, and said, wasn't that a proof? Some of them had called up the ghost of Tom Blindweed theirselves, and asked him questions, and heard from him that it was all true. But I dare say, guv'nor, you've read all about the fuss that was made,

I kept enug, watching from my winder. No one suspected me. I watched and waited for a week, and Molly never come out of the house. I had talks with the landlady of my lodgings about it, and she told me that Molly was frightened to stir out, and that she kept in bed the best part of the day. Then I thought it was time to put an end to it all.

I went out one morning, walked a long way to the other end of London, stepped into a barber's shop, and had myself clean shaved, and then come back to this street. I was recognised instanter, and it made me laugh to see the way old acquaintances first looked at me, and then run away from me. One man plucked up courage,

and spoke to me.

"It can't be Tom Blindweed," says he. "Why can't it?" says I, not letting on that I knew anything.
"Why can't it?" says he. "'Cause I

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you're dead, you know."
"Git out," says I, treating it as a joke. "Come and have half a pint."

He did; and in a very little while I was regularly mobbed. I took it goodhumouredly, and chaffed and laughed, and then managed to give 'em the slip, and make my way to Molly. She was at home; and when I come in she give a shrick, and covered her face with her hands.

"What's the matter, Molly?" says I. "I've come back, you see. It wasn't right of me going away as I did, and keeping away so long. Give me a kiss, Molly, and let us make it up."

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She wouldn't let me come nigh her. She was so scared that I thought she'd scream the house down. The noise, of course, brought in a lot of neighbours, and who should come in with them but a policeman a man had called in to take me

up. "What's the charge?" says the police-

"Not being dead," says I; and I tells him who I am.

"Quite right," says the policeman; he knew me. "The man that was buried for you wasn't the man he was supposed to be. He's proved to be somebody else. Mr. Blindweed's inquest is a good joke.'

With that he went away, and I sent the people packing out of my place, telling 'em I wanted to be alone with my wife. It was a long time, though, before I managed to convince Molly that I was really alive, but when she began to cry softly, I knew it was all right. We passed a happy evening, and for at least a week she was But she's turned again, and I don't think I'm quite free from blame. You see, I couldn't keep my own counsel. I let a word drop here, and a word drop there, and Molly put this and that together, and one day she artfully wheedled a lot out of me and got to know that it was me, and nobody else, who paid a visit to her and Dick Pawson as a ghost. tells me she'll never forgive the trick, but she will. I'll let her know that a man has a right to become his own ghost if he likes, especially when he's been served as I'll be master in my own I've been. house, or I'll know the reason why. Don't mistake me, guv'nor. I'm awfully sweet on Molly still—just you put that in print; I don't mind all the world knowing itand if she'll only treat me fair, I'll be as good to her as it's possible for a husband to be. But I ain't going to have my life made a misery. When Molly reads, as perhaps she will, through you, guv', that I don't care the snuff of a candle for any woman but her, and that it only depends upon herself whether we shall live a happy life, I've little doubt she'll show her sense, because, guv'nor, I'm sure her heart's in the right place. And when she gits back her good looks again-which she can, if she makes her mind easy-I'll show you the prittiest piece of goods you can see in a day's march.

Now we'll settle up, if you please. Let me see. I've been pattering away for all down in the way you have is a wonder. Three fifty-twos is a bunderd and fifty-six. In pennies, that's thirteen bob. Ten bob you gave me on account; three more 'll make it square. Thank you, guv'nor.

Why, here's Molly !

Molly, my dear, here's a gent who's put me in the way of earning thirteen bob in less than an hour. Take it, Molly, and buy yourself that hat you fell in love with yesterday.

Good-day, guv'nor.

MY WONDERFUL DREAM.

By C. L. PIRKIS

Author of "A House of Shadows," "With Golden Oars on a Silver Stream," etc., etc.

CHAPTER L.

I CAN see it now as plainly as I saw it when I awoke in the dawn of that winter's morning—a house with many gables, snowcovered, standing amid leafless trees in a snowy garden, overhead a night sky with a great white moon in it.

And—here comes the extraordinary part of my dream-every shadow which that moon threw upon the snow was blood-red; the house with its many gables; the gaunt, bare trees; the low, thickset hedges, seemed printed in crimson on that white snow.

What my dreams were before this snowpicture with its blood-red shadows flashed out on me, I do not remember-I dare say they were the usual fantastic réchauffé of events of the previous day. thing followed it, for, with a start, I awakened, bringing back with me from my dreams a sense of utter bewilderment, of which, even in my sleep, I had been conscious.

For a few minutes I lay still with closed eyes, trying to court a continuation alike of my slumber and its weird fancies. All in vain! Neither came back to me; so I racked my brains to find in the events of the preceding day a clue to my strange vision.

The events of the preceding day were easy enough to recapitulate—a hurried breakfast in my rooms in the Savoy; a quick drive to the Great Western Railway Station; then eight unbroken hours in the express to North Devon, during which I scanned sundry Australian papers that the morning's post had brought.

Fellow-passengers I had had none, until the train stopped at Bath, when an elderly fifty-two minutes, and how you've taken it | gentleman of a sociable turn of mind had 10

got in, and had travelled with me as far as The badness of the weather, by way of a beginning to conversation, possibly received a passing allusion—it had rained continuously during the past week-but with this exception our talk from beginning to end had centred exclusively on the possibility of the construction of an international language on phonetic principles, a subject to which I had never before given serious thought, but on which the elderly gentleman was an enthusiast.

After he had left the train at Exeter, I went back to my Australian papers; but I am confident that nothing descriptive of snow or snow-storms occurred in any one of the columns which I lightly skimmed.

The close of my day's railway journey had found me seated in a comfortable carriage, whirling easily on my way to the Priory, the country-house where my Christmas holidays were to be passed; and the close of my drive had found me seated in a handsome dining-room with a good glass of wine and a tempting supper before me.

In all this it seemed impossible to find a clue to the mystery of my dream, so I gave up the attempt, and tried to dismiss

the matter from my thoughts.

This visit to North Devon had been undertaken at the request of my unclemy father's only brother - Dr. Richard Hardwicke, at one time a leading practitioner in a West End district. Twenty years ago he had given up his practice and had bought an estate in North Devon, where he had settled down as a veritable patron saint of the district, building schools and a chapel-of-ease there, and winning for himself a wide reputation for

sanctity and benevolence. Uncle Richard had acted the part of a father to me - within certain limits-all my life through. My father, early in life, had cut himself adrift from his family; and, after wandering about the world a good deal, had settled down in Australia, and had married there. There, also, I bad been born, and there my mother had died when I was about six years old. After this sad event, my father's wandering tastes had seized upon him again; he had returned to Europe, and deposited me in a Parisian boarding school; and had set off for Spain, where Uncle Richard, on an autumnal pleasure trip, had arranged to meet him. There they met, and there my father had died suddenly of heart-disease. Uncle Richard had brought the news of tailor-made gowns, carried a walking-stick,

his death to me in my Parisian boardingschool; and from that day forward I owed

everything in life to him.

He had collected together the remnants of my father's Australian property, and had invested it for me in the English funds. He had given me a first-rate education, and at its close had secured for me an excellent appointment in a Government Nevertheless, I could not, during the whole twenty years of my life in England, recall one single kind word that Uncle Richard had ever given me. He had persistently kept me at arm's length; and the impression conveyed to my mind was that all he had done for me had been done because he was unwilling to repudiate the claims of kinship, not because his heart had opened to the orphan boy.

I think if it had not been for Flo, Uncle Richard's only child, the Priory would never have seen me. On the night of my arrival there, every one of its rooms seemed to give me a chill instead of a welcome. That large, handsome dining-room, in which I sat down to my supper, set my teeth on edge with the raw newness of its furniture

and decorations.

We were an old North country family, and had had a "place" somewhere up in the North once upon a time. Yet here had Uncle Richard settled down in the far South; had built a new house, and had surrounded himself with everything that was newest and most modern.

The only thing that gave me anything in the shape of a welcome was a little note from Flo, which the butler handed to me with the intimation that Uncle Richard

and she had retired for the night. This was Flo's note:

"DEAR REX,—I'm sent to bed as usual. Papa is dreadfully crusty to night. Between ourselves, he has not been quite bimself lately—I hope he is not going to be ill. Mind you enjoy your supper; and do, pray, be down in time for prayers in the morning. Snipe for breakfast! FLO."

"P.S.—I've given up all idea of becoming a poor-law guardian, and am going in now

for the medical profession."

Flo was exactly eighteen and a half. She was small and slight in figure; with tiny features; large china-blue eyes; and the complexion of a wax doll. She looked as if she ought always to be dressed in Watteau style as a Dresden-china shepherdess, mounted on a pedestal, and put under a glass shade. And she always wore

and for head-gear liked nothing better than one of my old deer-stalker hats!

Her greeting to me on the following morning, when I made my appearance in the breakfast-room, was characteristic. It

"I hope you haven't forgotten my neckties, Rex. I can't get anything down here startling enough. Big spots or cablepattern, that's what I want! Like yours, did you say? Oh, that's far too neat; I

wanted something surprising!"

Uncle Richard came up, gave me two fingers, and told Flo that he was ready for his coffee. Flo was the apple of his eye, and, since her mother's death about five years previously, had been the mistress of his household; but for all that he was apt to exact from her the prompt, unreasoning obedience of a child.

Our breakfast that morning was a typical one. We had no sooner seated ourselves at table than the Vicar of the parish came in. He had no sooner had his egg and coffee set before him than in came the Curate, and close on his heels followed the Churchwarden.

"If we only sat long enough at table," whispered Flo to me, "depend upon it the bell-ringers and grave-diggers would pre-

sent themselves."

There seemed to be a good many matters of parochial importance to discuss that morning, and Uncle Richard's opinion appeared to be greatly deferred to. I looked up at him once, when he was laying down the law on some matter connected with church decoration, and fully endorsed Flo's remark that "he was not looking himself." He was a tall, large-featured man, with cold, restless grey eyes. I had not seen him now for over a year, and during that year he seemed to me to have aged amazingly. There was on his face a harassed, hunted look, which puzzled me-knowing as I did what an easy, prosperous life he led from year's end to year's end.

Flo's look followed mine; then turned upon me enquiringly. To divert her attention I began telling the story of my strange

dream of over-night.

Her imagination was caught by it.

"Blood-red shadows on the white snow," she exclaimed. "Oh, you must have been reading Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner!'"

Looking up at that moment I caught Uncle Richard's eye fixed on us. In the that he would himself supply new surplices to the choir-boys if the choir fund were

unable to meet the expense, he stopped short, a change of expression passing over his face.

I assured Flo that the "Ancient Mariner" had not been in my hand since, as a small boy at school, I had learnt to hate it through having my parsing exercises drawn from its weird pages; nor could I, I went on to say, in any way trace my dream to its source. Then, in reply to Flo's queries, I gave her in detail my movements of the preceding day, beginning with my start from Paddington and ending with the elderly enthusiast on the international language.

A start from Uncle Richard at this

moment shook the breakfast-table.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed in a tone which no one present had ever heard him use before, "these plates are red hot!"

"My dear sir!" began the Vicar, depre-

"Wallace," said my uncle, sharply, addressing the butler, "take care that plates are never again put upon the table at this heat."

"As I was saying, my dear sir," recommenced the Vicar, "the choir fund is

at a very low ebb-

And under cover of the renewal of their subject of discussion, Flo and I fell back upon our former topic-my wonderful dream.

"It's a case of unconscious memory," said Flo, trying to look very learned, as if she had all the latest scientific theories upon unconscious cerebration at her fingers' tips. "Now I'll explain it all to you as nicely as possible. Dreams areno, memory is-no, that's not right either. Which way ought I to begin? I'm all in a mist."

Flo, in view of her impending studies for the medical profession, had evidently been skimming some of Uncle Richard's old books on the brain and its functions.

Her jump, however, at a scientific solution of my difficulty, struck a vein of

thought.

"I should begin with memory, I think," I answered. 'Our memory, unconsciously to ourselves, may retain the recollection of certain facts, and a key note of association struck, those facts may be suddenly presented to our mental vision although we may have lost the link between the key-note struck and the facts revived. very midst of an assurance to the Vicar Now on the theory that dreams are the continuation of waking thoughts-

But here Uncle Richard's voice broke in

" The chatter with an angry vehemence. at the other end of the table is intolerable. Flo, if you want to hear your own voice. go and practise your singing, and leave me to entertain our friends here.

Flo flushed scarlet. It was, however, impossible to disregard so peremptory an order. She at once rose and left the room. I followed as soon as possible. I found her not practising her singing, but feeding

her doves in the conservatory.

"Papa has changed so of late," she said. "He has several times lately spoken to me like that. Only yesterday he flew into a passion-yes, it was a downright passionbecause I asked him if we were connected with the Yorkshire Hardwickes. Nellie Williamson had asked me and I could not tell her."

I could have paired with this fact a similar instance of Uncle Richard's loss of temper, when some few years back I had put a question or two to him respecting our ancestry, and the possibility of our having distant relatives anywhere "up in the North." I knew that my grandfather had been the only son of an only son, but surely that did not preclude the possibility of a legion of distant cousins.

However, I did not relate this circum-I suggested to Flo that possibly Uncle Richard had business worries of which we knew nothing; some of his investments might have gone wrong-or it might be that he was not in quite such

good health as usual.

Flo looked up at me with her split peas

on her finger-tips.

"Yes, I dare say you're right," she said, "He has been consulting thoughtfully. a doctor lately, and he has, I know, been selling some land that he bought a year ago and meant to farm himself. And Rex, do you know, such a strange thing happened the other day. He asked me——" but here Flo broke off, her face covered with blushes; the words had evidently escaped her unawares.

But I would have the finish of her sentence.

"What was it, Flo ?" I asked, catching

hold of her hand.

"If I would like to be married," answered Flo, snatching her hand away, picking up the split peas again and feeding her pets at a furious rate.

"And you told him--1" I enquired, anxiously, trying hard to get a view of Flo's face, which was bent low over the doves' cage.

Voices at that moment made themselves heard just outside the glass-door at which we were standing. It was Uncle Richard

saying good-bye to his friends.

The conservatory jutted out from the side of the house, and between the greenery of the plants we could command a view of the drive which led down to the gates. The wintry sun-light fell full on Uncle Richard's face, unshadowed by hat; it showed pinched, wan, and furrowed. Flo looked at me, I looked at Flo. That face said as plainly as words could : "I have a secret locked in my heart which is slowly, but surely, sending me to my grave."

The sound of wheels coming up the drive made Uncle Richard pause, and look

"Visitors so early," exclaimed Flo. "No

one is expected!"

The wheels proved to be those of the "fly " from the village inn, which supplied the necessities of chance arrivals at the

little railway station.

Flo, all anxiety to know who were the approaching guests, tip-toed over the flowerpots. I, with my eyes fixed on Uncle Richard's face, saw a sudden, startled look sweep over it; then it grew ashen white, and for a moment he leaned for support against the pillar of the stone porch. door of the fly was opened and forthwith descended a portly, solemn-looking individual, who would have passed muster either as a retired butler, or an exalted Salvation Army General.

"You scarcely expected to see me!" were the words with which he greeted Uncle Richard in slow, unctuous tones, and with an odious smirk at the corners of his

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mouth.

Uncle Richard's lips moved, but no sound came from them. He led the way into the house in silence, and the immediate shutting of his study door told us that he and his unwelcome guest were closeted together.

Flo began to think of her morning's occupations, and led the way back into the house. To my surprise she took a pair of spectacles out of her pocket, walked to the nearest looking-glass and fitted them on her small nose in the most coquettish fashion.

"Don't come near me all the morning, Rex," she said, peremptorily. going into the library to study medicine. I told you I was going to tease papa into letting me enter myself as a student at one of the universities that admit women, and I'm qualifying for the preliminary exam."

Naturally I disregarded her prohibition and followed her into the library, for I had no mind to lose half an hour of her society if I could help it. Painting materials and an easel in one of the big bay-windows suggested an idea.

"Flo, I wish you'd take off those horrid glasses," I said, "and do me a favour."

Flo made her mouth into a round O.

and walked to the looking-glass.

"Horrid glasses! They're the loveliest things in the way of glasses I could get; and I won't take them off unless you tell me they are most becoming, and I look angelic in them," she replied.

"They are most becoming, and you look angelic in them; but I don't want you to be angelic, I want you to be human, and do

a kind-hearted action."

Flo's glasses were off in a moment.

"What is it?" she asked, for something in my tone told her that I was in

"I wish you would try and paint for me the picture I saw in my dream. I will make a rough sketch of the house if you'll paint in the sky, and the leafless trees, and the shadows. The truth is, the dream haunts me-I can't get rid of it-I feel-

"That there's a secret and a mystery in the house, and that dream is a part of it," finished Flo in a low voice, speaking the words which I had hesitated to utter.

That sketch occupied us the whole morning. Flo was very patient over it, and I was fidgety to the last degree. Again and again I sketched my house; now it was too high, anon too low; then when at length it was completed to my satisfaction, I found fault with Flo's treesthere were too many, their outlines were not sufficiently defined-and again and again she rubbed out and recommenced. When it came to the painting of the picture, we had a battle royal; Flo, in artistic fashion, wanted to get her snoweffects by neutral tints; I insisted that nothing but Chinese white would represent the snow of my dream. So the roof of the house and the garden slopes were painted a hard, staring white. Across this fell in rigid outline the crudest of blood-red shadows that carmine could produce; but shadows, nevertheless, that were thoroughly consonant with the lezenge of Chinese white which, in a stretch of dark sky, represented a moon.

Flo held the sketch at arm's length. "Talk about 'the light that never was on sea or shore!" she exclaimed. "I'll Flo, "you are ill-

undertake to say that never moon shed light on such a scene as this!"

In good truth, the picture was not one that might have come fresh from an artist's easel, but resembled rather a hard, staring diagram that a child might have painted.

Yet, such as it was, it was the picture of

my dream.

The luncheon-bell sounded. Flo tossed the sketch on to a writing-table, and together we made our way towards the dining-room. As we passed the study door, loud voices fell on our ear.

"You drive me hard," we could hear Uncle Richard saying in tones we could

hardly recognise as his.

To which we heard the unwelcome

visitor reply:

"I give you no alternative. You may outlive me; it's immediate help I want."

I hurried Flo into the dining-room, my apprehensions thoroughly aroused as to some painful secret in Uncle Richard's past career, for which he was now paying black-mail.

Those apprehensions were in no wise allayed when, about half an hour afterwards, Uncle Richard came into the room looking thoroughly tired out, as if by some physical struggle. We had heard some physical struggle. him escort his visitor to the front door, and Flo and I had drawn a breath of relief as the wheels which had brought him died away in the distance. Flo tried to greet her father with a smile and some light remark. He did not seem to hear her. He leaned his head on his hand in a gloomy silence, refusing every dish on the table, and drinking glass after glass of wine.

A more sudden and complete change in a man I had never before witnessed. I don't believe that any one of his clerical friends would have recognised in that half-dazed, gloomy man the good Churchman whose purse-strings were so readily unloosed to

the claims of local charities.

Flo was the first to rise from table. Her movement aroused Uncle Richard. sprang—no, tottered to his feet.

"Come into the library, both of you," he said, "I have something of importance to say to you."

His utterance was slow and thick; his

face was growing crimson now.
We followed him into the library. He closed the door carefully, then for a moment steadied himself with one hand against the table.

"Put it off till to-morrow, papa," pleaded

He held up his hand to silence her; then turned to me.

"I have had a visitor to-day—a man whom neither of you have ever seen— Robert Daniels; he was my butler when I lived in Harley Street."

He broke off. We waited in silence for

what was to follow.

He put his hand to his head, as if he kept his thoughts together with difficulty. "You may hear of that man again—he

is-well-no matter."

Again he broke off, looking vaguely round him, as if he had somehow lost the thread of his talk.

I drew a chair to his side, but he took no notice of it.

Suddenly he turned sharply to me, his face lighting up into sudden animation.

"I've never shown you much affection, Rex, so I don't expect love from you in return—don't interrupt me—but you love her, my little girl, I know. Well, I tell you, you may marry her, if she'll have you—don't interrupt——" Again his hand went to his head; the crimson flush across his brow deepening almost to purple now. His eyes wandered round the room once more. "I had better write it down," he muttered. Then to me aloud he said: "If I give you a sealed envelope, Rex, I can trust you not to open it till after my death?"

He tottered, rather than walked, towards a writing-table standing near the baywindow. On it there still lay Flo's sketch of my dream-picture. It caught Uncle Richard's eye; he stood staring at it like one transfixed. His face became livid, his lips parted, his eyes grew staring.

"In the name of heaven——" he began; then he staggered forward, and would have fallen if I had not caught him in my arms and lowered him gently to the ground.

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE RICHARD never spoke again.

He was laid in his grave on the Christmas Eve to which Flo and I had been looking forward for a whole year as a day of festivity and rejoicing. I had naturally communicated with Uncle Richard's lawyers, requesting them to attend the funeral and produce his will. To my surprise they telegraphed a reply that no will had ever been lodged in their hands, and advised that Uncle Richard's private papers at home should be carefully gone through.

I asked Flo to share this task with me, but she sent down a message by the Vicar's wife, who had taken possession of her, that she would be glad if I would undertake the duty without her. I accordingly set apart a day for searching Uncle Richard's writing-tables and cabinets, but although all his papers were arranged and docketed with a scrupulous exactitude, there was no sign of a will. I was puzzled by the circumstance, but did not think it a matter of much moment, as, of course, Flo would inherit everything.

I was rudely awakened from this illusion. Two days after the funeral, a stranger presented himself at the Priory, stating that he was the legal adviser of Mr. Robert Daniels, at one time butler to Dr. Hardwicke, and that he was anxious to communicate with Miss Hardwicke's solicitors respecting a will that had been left in his hands by her father, and in which he had been led to believe Mr. Daniels held an interest.

The interest which Mr. Daniels held in that will proved to be enormous. When it came to be read it was found that Uncle Richard had bequeathed to his former butler the whole of his estate, "real and personal," subject only to the miserable sum of two hundred a year to be paid to

I was astounded; then furious. I announced my intention of contesting the will—on Flo's behalf—in every law court in the kingdom. Both lawyers counselled prudence. They laid their finger on a clause in the will which stated that the bequest was made on account of "great and important services," rendered by Mr. Daniels to the deceased.

"You may possibly know something of the circumstances which called for great and important services," said Mr. Daniels'

legal adviser with a snigger.

"The question is," said old Mr. Vernon, our lawyer, with a frown, "whether you are prepared to unearth family secrets of which we are all in ignorance—a great deal must lie behind this."

I felt the truth of his words, and decided that Flo must be roused from her stupor of grief, and take counsel with me as to the course to be pursued. The Vicar's wife and I nearly came to hot words over this, but I carried the day, and made Flo come downstairs and see me alone.

She looked very white and stricken, poor child! and I fancied that she seemed to shrink from me. It occurred to me that she thought I was going to urge her to fulfil her father's last wishes, so I determined resolutely to keep love-making on the other side of the door. It was hard to tell her the story of her father's will. I fancied she would be broken-hearted-not at the loss of the money, but at the slight put upon her who had always been the darling of her father's heart. Strange to say, however - although when she bad heard the worst she grew deadly white, and for one monent seemed stunned—the next she had rallied, and in a voice that had all its old friendliness in it, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Rex, there's something behind all this-something we ought to get at."

That was exactly what I wanted to doget at the truth without throwing mire on the dead man's memory. With Flo in this frame of mind, it was easy to make her see things from my point of view. On one matter we were thoroughly in accord - namely, that no public legal proceedings should be taken, although, privately, we would gladly avail ourselves of old Mr. Vernon's professional services. The dead man had gone to his grave in the odour of sanctity; we would allow every penny of his money to go to Daniels rather than violate that sanctity by unearthing to public view what might be a dark chapter in his early life. Yet in order to set crooked things straight, and to avert the possibility of scandalous whispers getting afloat, we felt it might be necessary for us in private to turn back to, and read that dark chapter.

Flo was silent while I recapitulated one by one the key-notes to possible clues to the mystery of Uncle Richard's life.

First I adverted to the singularity of the circumstance of his cutting himself adrift from his family and connections.

"We must find out something of our ancestry, Flo," I said. "That matter, however, can be left in Mr. Vernon's hands."

To this Flo agreed, and I made a memorandum forthwith that a letter should be written to Mr. Vernon, requesting him to find out for us all he could respecting our family connections "up in the North.

Next we considered the singularity of the fact that Robert Daniels, though avowedly an old and faithful servant, should never have been seen at the Priory till the last day of Uncle Richard's life. We decided that Mr. Vernon should likewise be commissioned to set enquiries on foot concerning this man and his antecedents.

Then we set to work upon that last day of Uncle Richard's life, and deliberately

passed in review the circumstances which had seemed to excite such unreasonable anger in his mind.

First in order stood my chance allusion to the elderly enthusiast on the matter of an international language.

Next came the relation of my wonderful

dream

And finally, most inexplicable cause of an outburst of vehemence, came Flo's attempt at a scientific explanation of the origin of that dream.

There is a link somewhere between your dream and an international language," said Flo, at length. "And it was my attempt to find that link which excited papa's

anger."
Yes, that seemed self-evident. It might be that my conversation with my fellowtraveller had struck a vein of thought, which unconsciously to me, had continued through my waking moments, and of which in one brief flash in my sleep I had become conscious. That is to say, I was conscious only of the goal at which my unconscious thinking had landed me; not of the road by which I got there. The idea seemed consonant with modern theories on the subject of dreams and of unconscious memory.

And pursuing this chain of supposition, it seemed possible that Uncle Richard, at a glance, had seen the connection between my dream and my chance conversation with a fellow-traveller. The missing link might be a recollection of my early days lost to me, but fresh in his memory.

It was easy to get so far in our line of reasoning, but it brought us back to the point from which we had started, namely, what was that missing link, how were we to get at it?

"After all," said Flo, with a mournful look at the table on which still lay the crude little sketch which had given Uncle Richard his death-shock, "the dream must be the thing on which we ought to concentrate our attention."

There flashed through my mind a wild idea of relating my dream in the advertisement columns of the daily papers, in the hope that something might come of it. A second thought following on the heels of this, suggested an advertisement of another sort. If the dream and the international language were so closely linked together, why not issue an advertisement offering a reward for theories on the latter subject, and see if any one of them would strike a key-note in unison with my dream?

Flo did not take up with this idea very warmly; in good truth, it seemed a trifle visionary. We had, however, nothing better to put in its place, so after careful deliberation wesketched out the following advertisement:

"A gentleman interested in the formation of an international language, offers a prize of fifty guineas for the best theory on the matter succinctly stated within a hundred written lines. The competition will close within a fortnight from the date of this advertisement."

The advertisement was to appear simultaneously in all the leading London journals, and replies were to be addressed to me at

the Priory.

After we had despatched our advertisement, Flo and I were not very sanguine as to its results. Curious results, however, soon followed, though scarcely of the kind we expected. The post on the day following that on which my advertisement had appeared, brought me two letters, one from Mr. Vernon, the second from my fellow-traveller from Bath to Exeter. I opened the latter first, and recognised the signature at the foot of the page; for we

had exchanged cards.

"I am delighted, my dear young friend," ran the letter, "to see the interest I have awakened in your mind on an important subject. Your fifty guineas does not tempt me, no, nor would five hundred pay any one to write a hundred lines of commonsense on a subject so thickly set with diffi-If, however, you are interested in collecting curious theories on the matter, I should like you to go and see a man I came upon quite unexpectedly a little while ago when visiting a friend at Dr. Adam's private asylum, Green Street, The man's name was John Manchester. Horner; he had been an inmate of the asylum for over twenty years, and they said he was sane on all points save onean international language. His theories are too long to state here. His great stumbling - block was the difficulty of expressing the difference between past, present, and future time by the theory he advocated. He was puzzling hard over this when I went in, and he said it had occupied his attention for close upon thirty years. The superintendent said, 'he believed if the man could but solve this difficulty his reason would be restored." The writer concluded with best wishes for the success of my endeavour.

Flo ran her eye over this while I went

on to read Mr. Vernon's letter.

It brought startling news. On the preceding day the legal representative of Mr. Robert Daniels had called at Mr. Vernon's office, and had stated that although his client was perfectly convinced of the legality of his claim upon Dr. Hardwicke's estate, he was yet willing to effect a compromise with Miss Hardwicke, and if she would execute a deed undertaking to pay him one thousand pounds a year, he would at once destroy the will in her presence.

Flo read this page over my shoulder. We both agreed that the appearance of my advertisement might have occasioned this sudden concession on Mr. Daniels' part, though how or why we knew not.

Then I turned over to the other side of Mr. Vernon's letter, and heartily regretted that Flo's eyes were following mine along the page, for it told a pitiful tale of fraud and craft—laid bare, in fact, what we then believed to be the whole of Uncle Richard's guilty secret, but what we were quickly to find was but half of it.

Mr. Vernon stated that in pursuance of my instructions he had instituted enquiries into the family history of the Hardwickes, and that although Hardwickes by the score were scattered about Yorkshire, yet our branch of the family fifty years back was represented only by my grandfather and his two sons, my father, John, and Uncle Richard. John wandered away from home before he was twenty, and for thirty years no one heard anything of him. In the year 1864 my grandfather had died, leaving no will, and Richard had taken possession of his property. A short time before his death he had, at Richard's suggestion, sold his Yorkshire estate, and had invested the purchase-money in the There seemed to be some doubt as funds. to the exact date of the year in which my father had died in Spain; but even supposing that his death had preceded my grandfather's, I was entitled to my share in the property, and Uncle Richard's share would have been proportionately diminished. It had, however, been nobody's business to enquire into the matter. Dr. Hardwicke had a high reputation for honour and integrity, and every one who thought about it had concluded that my interests had been duly considered.

Flo dropped the letter, gave me one look, and left the room. When we had set enquiries on foot respecting the Yorkshire Hardwickes, we had not bargained for such

a revelation as this.

I did not see Flo all that day, and when she came down to breakfast the next morning she had recovered her outward composure, at any rate, and was as eager as I was to see if the post had brought any further response to my advertisement.

Two letters lay upon the table. One from Mr. Vernon, conveyed the information that Mr. Daniels, in person, had presented himself at Mr. Vernon's office, and had reduced his demand of yesterday from a thousand pounds to five hundred per annum, as he was anxious, he said, to get matters settled. Mr. Vernon farther stated that his enquiries respecting this man had brought to light the fact that on leaving Uncle Richard's service, twenty years ago, he had set up a store in New York, and it was most likely the failure of this store, a short time back, which had sent him to Europe to levy additional black-mail on Uncle Richard.

The second letter was dated from a small street somewhere in Islington, and enclosed a few sheets of loosely-tied manuscript. The writer of the letter, a Mrs. Oldfield, hoped that they might be of use to me, and added, that if they met with my approval she would be thankful for remuneration, for she had kept them carefully for over twenty years.

I ran my eye over the manuscript, and felt my brain swim and my eyes grow dim. Here, in these pages yellowed with age, lay the hidden link between my dream and an international language! Here, too, the reason for Uncle Richard's angry vehemence on the matter was laid

bare to view!

The faded ink, in odd jerky sentences, stated a theory for the construction of a universal language for writing purposes by means of colour, and the signature at the bottom of these, at times incoherent, pages, was that of my father, John Hardwicke.

One paragraph I will give as it stood. After stating that, according to his theory, abstract ideas should be represented by the primary colours, that endless modifications of ideas might be expressed by shades of colour thrown upon the groundwork of another colour, and the absence of all thought or emotion by pure white, my father went on to give an example of his meaning.

"I subjoin here a diagram," he wrote, that will illustrate the potency of colour to convey impressions to the simplest understandings. Here is the picture of a servant's—master's brother, he was in

house in a garden. I paint that house, that garden pure white, as if snow-covered. Now what is the idea conveyed by that snow-white picture? Is it not that absence alike of thought or emotion, which we call peace? Now, see! I dash blood-red shadows athwart the snow, and what is the idea conveyed? Is it not that within that house dwell all sorts of evil passions—anger,

murderous hate perhaps?"

The diagram was not there, but there were evidences that it had been torn from between the leaves of the manuscript. Possibly the book had been tossed to me to amuse me, and, my childish fancy captivated by the bright colours, the picture had been so indelibly impressed upon my memory, that twenty years had not sufficed to obliterate it. There it had lain in the hidden recesses of my brain ready to flash forth at a moment's notice, while the deeper subject which had called it into being, had failed to make any deep impression upon me.

How had the writer of this letter become possessed of this manuscript? what did she know of my father's last hours? were the thoughts that naturally arose in my mind as I reverently laid on one side the faded manuscript.

A journey to London might answer these questions, so I was out of the house and on my road to the by-street at Islington within ten minutes from the time that I broke the seal of that letter.

It was late at night when I knocked at Mrs. Oldfield's door; but my impatience would not let me defer my visit till the following morning. She freely answered all my questions. Twenty years ago, she said, she was English waitress at an hotel in Seville, when Mr. Hardwicke went to lodge there. He was very eccentric in his manner of conducting himself, and used to write nearly from morning till night. One day an English gentleman came to see him, accompanied by his servant. They stayed at the house with Mr. Hardwicke for a short time, and then all three departed together. On the day following their departure, the servant came back to the hotel and asked permission to go round Mr. Hardwicke's rooms, in case he had left papers of any sort behind. He seemed very anxious on the matter, and furthermore stated that the gentleman was hopelessly insane, and that although he per-sisted in calling himself John Hardwicke, and gave out that he was his-the

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reality no relative, but merely a friend, and his name was John Horner.

All this Mrs. Oldfield related in clear detail, and further added that the manuscript which she had sent to me she had found, after the servant had departed, behind a cabinet, that she had retained possession of it, thinking it possible that at some time or other it might be claimed, or that she might in some manner get it into the hands of the gentleman who appeared so anxious about the mad gentleman's manuscripts. After keeping it carefully, however, for twenty years, she had come to the conclusion that no one was likely to claim it, and my advertisement had tempted her to turn the possession of it to her own pecuniary advantage.

Here was a strange story-not one of death-bed hours, and last messages, such as I had expected to hear, but one even more gloomy, if interpreted by later events. Insane my father might have been—possibly was; but what had been his fate after he had been enticed to quit his hotel ? Had he been hurried into a nameless grave, or incarcerated in some private lunatic asylum under an assumed

name ?

Here, in a flash of thought, the name, John Horner, which Mrs. Oldfield had mentioned brought to my mind the letter from my fellowtraveller, recounting his introduction to the inmate of the Green Street Asylum, who held strange theories respecting the formation of an universal language.

But my story must end here. I am not fond of recalling, even in quiet talk with Flo, my visit to the Green Street Asylum, and my first glimpse of a dignified, if absent-looking, old man seated at a table covered with paints and palettes, who was introduced to me as Mr. John Horner. The account of his coming to the Asylum, some twenty years back, was given to me by the medical superintendent, to whom it had been handed down by a predecessor in office. Dr. Hardwicke had brought the man to the Asylum, having previously written to the authorities apprising them of the patient he was about to place under their care. He charged himself with all subsequent expenses, and stated that the man was hopelessly insane, but perfectly harmless. He had, he said, injured his brain in the pursuit of one idea-au international language.

Dr. Hardwicke had further stated that one of the man's crazes was to believe him-

ago in Australia; his real name, however, was John Horner, as appeared on the certificate. This certificate, it may be added, was signed by Uncle Richard and by Robert Daniels; the latter purported to be a doctor who really bore that name and lived in a North London district.

The secret of Uncle Richard's life was plain reading to me now, thanks to the wonderful dream which had struck the key-note of it. But, for Flo's sake, that secret had to be kept secret still; and thus it came about that when Robert Daniels suddenly disappeared from his London address, he was allowed so to disappear without hue or cry being raised.

An odd thing happened on the day that Flo and I were married. I had arranged with the Superintendent of the Green Street Asylum that my father, with a proper attendant, should for the future live with us at the Priory. Thus attended, he made one of the wedding-party at the church. At the close of the service, as Flo and I knelt before the altar, a long, narrow sunbeam slanted through a side window, and falling full upon Flo's bent head, turned her crown of flaxen hair beneath her white veil into a crown of gold.

My father jumped up excitedly and clapped his hands. "I have it, I have it," he cried, triumphantly; "silver for the past tenses; neutral tipt for the present; but gold, and gold only, is the colour for

the future!"

THE CARDINAL'S HANDS. BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

CHAPTER I.

"YES, you can send the girl here," said Miss Bodankin, as she sipped her customary after-dinner glass of claret at her own dinner-table in her own anug apartments at Hampton Court. Snug they certainly were, those old-fashioned rooms, with their oak panelling that reflected the glow of fire and lamp-light in broken gleams from their polished surface; as snug as the richest of curtains, and carpets, and cushions, and the softest of general padding could make them. Old pictures were on the walls, and old oak buffets adorned the dining-room, while through the curtained alcove could be seen an inner drawingroom, bright with gilding and mirrors, self to be his brother, who had died years and lighted by an array of wax candles

in glittering crystal chandeliers. The small, round dining-table drawn close to the fire, with its array of flowers, cutglass, and massive silver plate, was a cosy and pleasant sight. But all these pleasant and softening influences had little effect upon the countenance of Miss Bodankin. She sat there stern, uncompromising, gloomy, and if there was any satisfaction to be read upon her features, it was due to the reflection that her solitary guest was enjoying some unhappy moments, as he listened to the remarks of his hostess. "Send the girl here," Miss Bodankin had The girl was only his daughter; only all the pleasure and brightness of his Still it would have to be done.

Miss Bodankin's solitary guest was her brother George, with whom she had not foregathered for twenty years or more. Twenty years! Twenty years ago Miss Bodankin had been a spinster, aged forty; an old maid, in fact; and she was no worse off now. But twenty years ago she had been under the dominion of a stern, tyrannical father, and often in humiliating straits for want of a little pocket-money. Now she was her own mistress, tolerably well off; she owned to that much, although she never boasted of her belongings. Twenty years ago she had looked upon her brother with hopeless envy and bitter jealousy. They were not children of the same mother. George was the offspring of a young wife, whom old Bodankin had acquired, people said, in satisfaction of a bad debt; and, during the short period of her reign at the old banking house in Harley Square, her step-daughter had regarded her with profound aversion and contempt. And then the boy, George, had always been preferred to the girl-her interest had always been sacrificed for his. She might have married well, had her father consented to open his money-bags a little. But no. George was the pride of his father's heart; everything was kept for him. Crusty and penurious, as far as the rest of the world was concerned, to George the old banker was profuse and even lavish in his generosity.

And now! George must be nearly fifty now; he looked old and broken, but still gentlemanly in the evening-dress that his sister had provided for him. But how had he looked in that threadbare coat and absurd old-fashioned hat, as he had appeared to his sister but the day before yesterday, haphazard in the Palace gardens! Name, and fame, and everything were gone for | Bodankin, coldly.

George; he was no longer a Bodankin, but simply a man named Fitch, whose wife had a laundry somewhere in Bloomsbury,

or, perhaps, Marylebone.
Twenty years ago George had disgraced himself and his family so hopelessly, that his outraged father had disowned him, and cut him out of his will. Mr. Bodankin had no other child except his daughter Olivia, and she-Miss Bodankin, that isfully expected at her father's death, which happened soon after, to benefit by poor George's disgrace. But no. A bare three hundred a year was settled upon her for All the rest of his property old Bodankin bequeathed to his cousin, General Hunter. A great deal of sympathy was felt for the daughter who was thus deprived of a fortune which seemed naturally to belong to her, and as a result of this feeling, interest was made in high quarters, and Miss Bodankin obtained a grant of the comfortable apartments at Hampton Court which she at present enjoyed. The General was, however, a man of punctilious feeling. He was in India at the time, but when he returned, he took steps to transfer all that he had received from his cousin to his cousin's daughter, Miss Bodankin.

When Miss Bodankin accidentally met that disreputable brother of hers, and recognised him after all these years, and saw that she herself was recognised, her first impulse was to give him the cut direct, in the form of a stony, unrecognising stare. Perhaps, had he looked miserable and dejected she would have obeyed this impulse. But, as it happened, he was laughing heartily—he and a handsome young woman who accompanied him, were thoroughly enjoying some good joke. That George should be happy and merry although shabby, while she, Miss Bodankin, a respectable and in every way dignified person, was feeling cross and miserable, struck her as being so flagrantly out of keeping with the Providential order of things, that she felt her curiosity aroused as to the cause. And with that she stopped, and the brother took off his hat as if she had been an ordinary acquaintance.

"Mr. Fitch, I think," said Miss Bodankin, making a ghastly imitation of a smile. "Walk on, Olive; I will join you directly," said the "soi-disant" Mr. Fitch. The girl moved on, first taking in Miss Bodankin's general appearance in one quick, sweeping glance.

"Your daughter, I presume," said Miss

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"Your niece Olive, my dear Olivia," rejoined Mr. Fitch, with a sarcastic inflec-"Charmed to see you tion of his voice. looking so well! Good morning."

"Stay," said Miss Bodankin. " Now that we have met, I should like to hear something about you. Come and dine with me the day after to-morrow. All to our two selves."

Fitch hesitated, but finally accepted the invitation. He had a kind of superstitious dread of crossing the barrier that divided him from his former existence, but still he longed to hear how matters had gone with old acquaintances and friends. The visit could hardly have ulterior consequences. He would appear like a ghost, and so depart, content with a single glimpse of the scenes of other days.

When Mr. Fitch rejoined his daughter, he found her possessed with a certain natural curiosity as to his late meeting. "Was it a lady of title he had spoken toshe seemed very stiff and stand-offish-or some one connected with the Court ?"

Mr. Fitch replied that the lady was nothing very remarkable; but an acquaintance of days gone by, when his means were greater than now.

"That was before you were married, papa, I suppose," said Olive, "when you could spend all your money on yourself."

"Exactly," said Mr. Fitch, pleasantly. "Your mother takes care that I don't make ducks and drakes with the money now."

Olive laughed. It certainly was the fact that Mrs. Fitch kept a tight hold upon the purse-strings. But that was necessary enough; for her husband had a facile way of getting rid of money, that would have brought him to downright want, if his wife had not been at the helm. He acknowledged to himself that he owed everything in the world to his Isabel. She had rescued him from the grave of a suicide. Her energy and business capacity had brought them a moderate prosperity. He had never contributed much to their success, and after sundry efforts, as strenuous as he could make them but of no particular result, he had ceased to try. But he was very amiable, contented, and agreeable, and Mrs. Fitch was well contented with him for a husband; and, comparing him with other people's husbands, she often thanked her stars that had given her a gentleman for her portion, although certainly had he been capable of bullying and storming about, he would have been more useful in the business. For her work- figures. A friendship had naturally sprung

girls were very tiresome, and pleasant words were altogether wasted upon them.

The pair had only one daughter, Olive, and it must not be supposed that she roughened her pretty hands in soapsuds, or bent herself double over the ironing board. There were means in plenty to give the girl a good education. She had been a pupil at the nearest high school, and, showing a strong aptitude for drawing, she had become a student at South Kensington. She had shown a pretty taste in colour and design, and now she was engaged at Milbank's pottery, painting cups and vases, and earning a comfortable weekly stipend.

The Fitch's establishment occupied the greater part of an old-fashioned house in a dingy street not far from the Portland Road. Olive had her studio at the very

top of the house, where there was a roomy attic with a covered roof, and a good toplight; and here the girl set up her easel and stretched her canvases; for she had ambition, and intended to paint a picture one day, that should appear at the Grosvenor or the Academy. The studio opened upon the leads, and here the girl and her father had made a pleasant kind of border with flower-boxes and trellis-work, and festooned with scarletrunners and gay nasturtiums, where Mr. Fitch would smoke his pipe with great contentment on summer evenings, and gaze over the roofs that were glowing in the vapourous sunshine; even the roofs and chimneys of what had been his father's house, marked by the tall chestnuts in the square beyond. One busy, noisy street alone divided the scenes of his former life from those of the present; but it served the purpose as effectually as though it had been that deep and silent stream which blots out all remembrance. And sometimes at the sunset hour they would hear the lions roaring for their prey, or the elephants trumpeting on their evening walk, and other mysterious sounds from Regent's Park way, all of which gave a kind of

romantic tinge to the familiar scene. And it so happened that the corresponding room on the adjoining leads was also occupied as a studio—and by a very handsome young fellow, who was in training as a sculptor. He did not live in the house, but in one of the squares to the westward, but he spent all his spare time here modelling in clay or covering the walls of the room with charcoal sketches of groups and

up between the two artists-each criticised the other's performances in a friendly but searching manner. It was Mr. Fitch, indeed, who had first made the acquaintance of the sculptor, and who had discovered the loose rail in the iron palisading that divided the roofs. But the acquaintance once formed, the young people grew more intimate and friendly day by day, till autumn came, and the scarlet-runners and the nasturtiums began to droop, and the air upon the leads to grow foggy and chilly, and Mr. Hunter, the sculptor, was off to Rome for the winter, promising to write often and tell his little friend all the news of the studios.

"Ah, papa!" cried Olive, when the young man had departed; "why can't you

take me to Rome, too ?"

"Exactly," said Mr. Fitch, jingling the " But come, few loose coins in his pocket. my girl, if we can't go to Rome, we will go to Hampton Court; there are pictures there, and, I fancy, a statue or two."

But the day happened to be a Friday, which, if it does not deserve its ordinary reputation, is, at all events, an unlucky day at Hampton Court; for the galleries are all closed, and housemaids and brooms are in the ascendant. But Olive and her father were happy enough in roaming about the gardens, till, in a sunny nook in the old private gardens, they came across Miss Bodankin.

And this brings us to Miss Bodankin's dinner-table, and to the understanding between her and her brother that Olive was to be sent to her "on trial."

CHAPTER II.

OLIVE had paid a fortnight's visit to Miss Bodankin, and, on the whole, the visit had been a success. The girl had enjoyed herself, at all events, and she had made friends with the people about her. Miss Bodankin's rooms had seemed so much the brighter for her presence, that, when she had gone, the old lady felt quite

gloomy and depressed.

"I will have that girl for myself," muttered Miss Bodankin, as she sat down to her writing; for she kept a diary, if you please, and when any little event occurred, such as Olive's visit, she made a summary of the impressions it had caused, and entered it carefully in the volume. "George is a fool," she said to herself, "and does not deserve to enjoy any of the good things of life."

His daughter should come and live with her, and brighten her weary pilgrimage, Miss Bodankin decided. She would adopt her; the girl should be Miss Bodankin, and inherit all that she had to leave. Not that she intended to die just yet. Her grandmother lived to be ninety, and so might she-that was thirty years to come yet - and by that time Olive would be nearly fifty, and old enough to look after things. For she should not marry; Miss Bodankin would take care to guard her from such a fate as that. And then Olive could adopt somebody in her turn, and in this way the line of Miss Bodankins could be continued into per-

petuity.

Strengthened by these thoughts, Miss Bodankin forthwith wrote a letter to Mr. Fitch, to the effect that she was pleased with his daughter, and would like to adopt her. Olive would be treated as the future Miss Bodankin; she should have masters, models, or whatever she might require for her artistic studies. Miss Bodankin would not object to spend a few years in Rome, if that were judged advisable. If the girl behaved dutifully and properly, Miss Bodankin would give her a handsome allowance-say three hundred a year, for dress and pocket-money—and would leave her amply provided for. Miss Bodankin only exacted one condition, but that was "Olive must hold no indispensable: further communication with her former relatives and friends from the time she became a member of Miss Bodankin's household."

When she had sealed and despatched the letter, Miss Bodankin began to wonder how George would take it. He would give up his daughter, she felt sure; he was one of those weak, yielding creatures who He would have give up everything. certainly come to ruin sooner or later, even if his sister had not given him a last little push over the abyss. That was a little circumstance which did not appear in the diary, but it recurred to Miss Bodankin sometimes in the silent watches of the

night.

This night especially, having dismissed her maid, and being snugly ensconced in bed—a shaded lamp giving a mild and gentle light, and a fire of logs flickering cheerfully on the tiled hearth. Bodankin having composed herself to drop quietly asleep, was, instead, confronted with a vision of those other days. It was her father's voice she heard, speaking in

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strangely agitated tones: "Go to George, before he leaves the house, tell him, beg him, to come and ask my forgiveness, and all shall be forgiven." And then she saw herself standing irresolute on the stairs, while her brother descended step by step, his face whitened with despair. "George had been so often forgiven," she whispered to herself; "let him pay the penalty now." And then the hall-door had closed behind her brother with a loud bang.

And a door had banged somewhere at that moment-Miss Bodankin heard itan unusual sound at night, for walls were thick, and doors were solid in the old Cardinal's Palace, and few sounds were

heard from outside.

Tradition said that the room which Miss Bodankin occupied as a bedchamber, had once been Cardinal Wolseley's private room; the Cardinal's hat was carved somewhere on the stonework of the chimney, and the broad, black oak mantelshelf was enriched with carved work of his period. Some people might have felt the associations of the place to be a little eerie, but Miss Bodankin was not a superstitious Still, that oaken staircase did creak and groan most unaccountably at times; and the servants had at times heard footsteps and the sound of voices, when there was nothing to account for the same.

However, there was nothing in the slamming of a door to excite any great apprehension, and Miss Bodankin was wooing sleep once more, when another scene presented itself vividly to her mind. Again she heard her father's voice: "Go and seek George, and bring him back to me." And she had known where to find him well enough, for he had written to her and told her of the girl who had picked him out of the gutter, and who loved him well enough to marry him. And she, Miss Bodankin, had gone to her father and said: "You need not trouble yourself about George, he has married a girl from the streets and she will take care of him."

That was the piece of news which gave the finishing stroke to her father, and, if it was not quite the truth, still she thought it was at the time. And what advantage did she get by the matter? Why, none at all; she had gained absolutely nothing by George's disgrace. All her present comforts she owed to General Hunter's sense of honour and love of justice, and this had nothing to do with George and

his disgrace.

Still, even about this last-mentioned transaction there was some hidden circumstance, the recollection of which made Miss Bodankin's pillow an uneasy one. And all the time she felt as if some one were reading her hidden thoughts, and making out first one point and then another, as if it were a Judge who was summing up the case against her. And this impression grew so strong in her mind, that at last she called out, quite loudly in intention, but in reality in a strangled whisper: "Not guilty, my Lord;" and then, with a feeling of terror upon

her, sat straight up in bed.

The light from lamp and fire still cast a soft glow over the room, and what Miss Bodankin saw she saw with perfect clearness. There, upon the black oak mantel-shelf, rested a pair of hands. They were red hands, too; not red with blood, but as if encased in red gloves—fine silken gloves, curiously stitched and marked. The hands were carelessly crossed one upon the other, as if the figure to which they belonged were standing in meditative attitude by the fire, half leaning against the chimneypiece. Miss Bodankin closed her eyes and reasoned with herself. "It is some optical illusion, like those you see in the advertisements," she argued to herself. "I wore yellow gloves to-day. I must have looked at them as they lay on my dressing-table, and now I see them yonder reproduced in red." She opened her eyes again; She opened her eyes again; the red hands were still there. alarmed her; but she kept her eyes fixed upon them, and, after awhile, one was removed, and then the other. The floor creaked, the stairs creaked, down below a door slammed again, and all was still.

Next morning, Miss Bodankin sent for her medical adviser, who found her rather feverish, and prescribed a pill and draught. One or two friends, hearing that she was unwell, came in to see her. The last to leave was a sprightly young widow, the latest and best addition to the little com-

munity.

"My dear," said Miss Bodankin, nervously, as the gay little lady was about to depart, "You know everything; pray tell me-it is some absurd gossip of the servants-but did you ever hear of the appearance of two red hands ?"

"My dear Miss Bodankin!" cried the other, "you have been here all these years and don't know that ? Why those are the Cardinal's hands! Why they should appear, and no other part of him, I don't d

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know; but so it is. They are not often seen; but let those who see them look out. Crossed, they are simply a warning; clasped, they mean — well, something dreadful. They say the dear man always clasped his hands and said a short prayer before he sentenced anybody to death. The moral is, that we should all be very good and virtuous, lest at any time we should see the Cardinal's hands. I never expect to see them, don't you see; so good-bye, dear Miss Bodankin, till to-morrow."

Miss Bodankin blanched a little at the story she had heard; but she was of a stout, resolute spirit, and as she took her pill and draught that night, she said:

"Here is something that will exorcise the Cardinal." And, indeed, the night passed without alarm, so did many succeeding ones.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Olive reached home, after her visit to Miss Bodankin, she found the change at first a little depressing. There everything had gone so smoothly. Here the wheels of life went round with creaking and groaning. Her mother was worried and impatient; her father looked shabby and unkempt in contrast with the trimlooking people about Miss Bodankin; and the prospect of getting up early in the raw morning and making her way to the pottery through the mud, was anything but inviting. But there was balm in Gilead after all—in the shape of a letter awaiting her, a letter with an Italian stamp, a letter from Rome. Mr. Hunter had promised to write; but such promises are often forgotten; and this letter was a famous redemption of his pledge; for it was long and amusing, and what was better still, decidedly tender in some of its pas-The writer was longing for the sympathetic companionship which had been his delight in times gone by. Rome, minus Olive, was hardly equal to Marylebone, plus Olive.

"Sometimes, my dear Olive," the letter went on, "I regret that we are not rich, and that I have to look to my art for future pence as well as fame. We nearly were rich once, my father tells me. A half-cracked fellow left him a large property, cutting his own children out altogether. My dear dad very properly refused to benefit by such an iniquitous robbery. I honour him for it that all the

same I wish the rightful heirs would will it back again. What delightful castles in the air one might anchor to terra firma

with a few bags of gold !"

Yes, it was a nice letter, and Olive proposed to answer it at once; but not till she had recovered from that slight disillusionment which is the opposite of homesickness. Now when she returned from the pottery next evening, her father had been some time in possession of Miss Bodankin's letter, sealed with the family seal, in which she made her proposal to adopt the girl as her own. He had a presentiment that the letter was coming, but it was a shock to him when it did come.

He was to give up his daughter. She who had trotted by his side as a little fairy minx, the school-girl whose lessons had been puzzled out with his zealous assistance, the young woman who was such a gay and loving companion, she was to vanish from his life as completely as if she were dead. But he felt that he must make the sacrifice. Olive would be restored to the position that he had forfeited. Life would be sweet and pleasant to her, and she would soon cease to regret the friends of her youth. Just now, if he showed her Miss Bodankin's letter, Olive would revolt with indignation from the condition that she was to give up her father and mother, but Mr. Fitch determined to suppress that part of the letter. When once she had got into the current of her new life, she would be easily weaned from all old associations, a process that might safely be left to Miss Bodankin to carry out.

Mrs. Fitch, beyond a few natural tears, had no objection to offer to the proposed plan; and her husband, seeing no further rocks ahead, prepared to spread it before his daughter's eyes in its most alluring Olive was certainly dazzled and attracted, as she could hardly fail to be; but it gave an added pang to poor old Fitch's troubles to see how eagerly she entered into the plan. "Shall we go to Rome this winter?" was her first eager question. But if her first impression was only of what she should gain, as her excitement wore off she thought also of what she would lose. And before bed-time came she stole up to her father and put her cheek against his, and whispered :

gether. My dear dad very properly refused to benefit by such an iniquitous robbery. I honour him for it; but all the

offer; but, after all, perhaps I should never make a good artist, and then see what a disappointment that would be for everybody.

"But I have written to say you are going," replied Mr. Fitch, in feigned anger. "And there is nothing more to be said

about it."

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In reality, Miss Bodankin did not care two straws whether Olive became a good artist or not; and this Olive soon discovered when she took up her permanent abode at the Court. To amuse Miss Bodankin was to be the great end of her existence. To walk or drive with Miss Bodankin; to read aloud to her, and send her to sleep in the afternoons; to decorate the dinner-table, and arrange the flowervases; to sing and play a little after dinner, and take a hand at piquet or bezique; these were to be the chief employment of her days, and the odd moments of her leisure she might spend at her easel.

But if here was bondage, Olive's chains were well gilded. She might order as many dresses as she pleased, and Miss Bodankin was lavish in her presents of jewels and ancient lace, and of hoarded family treasures. And the people about were very pleasant and sociable. sprightly widow, Lady Ornby Craggs, took a great fancy to Olive, and was always running after her, full of some new scheme of passing the time. All the younger people, too, were more or less artistic in taste, and Olive found herself in great request from her acquaintance with the

technicalities of the potter's art.

But as the charm of novelty wore off, Olive became a trifle low-spirited and even unhappy. She thought regretfully of her ancient freedom, of the camaraderie of the workshop, of the companionship of her ally the sculptor. And Ned Hunter had not written again, although she had sent him a nice long letter soon after she arrived at the Court. She did not know that Miss Bodankin exercised a strict censorship over the letter-bag in its out-goings and in-comings, and that she had made up her mind that Olive should hold no further correspondence with any of her old set.

But when Miss Bodankin came upon Olive's letter addressed to Edward Hunter, Esquire, —, Rome, she gave a guilty start. Was it possible that in this name she was only to read a coincidence? She opened Olive's letter and read it. Then she felt reassured. This was only some artist with whom the girl carried on a

Platonic correspondence. Let it go into the fire.

Olive's low spirits had an irritating effect on Miss Bodankin. Like one who buys a piping bullfinch that will not pipe, she felt herself injured in the transaction.

"Send me home for a week or two, Miss Bodankin, please," said Olive, when reproached for her want of nerve. But that was not convenient at the time. It never would be convenient if Miss Bodankin had

her way.

Meantime the winter passed away, spring came on, and then summer, the early summer when London-anyhow, western London—is so attractive, when the trees are in their freshest of green, and the houses festooned with flowers; when the streets are filled with a gay and luxurious traffic, and when music and the footsteps of the dancers are heard from all the booths of

Vanity Fair.

Poor old Fitch watched the scene from afar, from his booth on the housetops, as he smoked a solitary pipe. There was no bower there now, the old flower-boxes lay there in a heap, with last year's mould all caked within them; he had not the heart to touch them. There were signs of life, too, in the studio next door. The place had been cleaned and furbished up, and now the proprietor had arrived; and wrapped up in his working apron, he, too, came out into the sunshine and looked about him. Espying Mr. Fitch, the young sculptor gave him a cheery greeting. "But where is Olive," he cried, as they shook hands through the railings; "what have you done with the child 1

"Alas!" said Mr. Fitch, dejectedly, "I

have sold her to the Philistines.

"What do you mean?" demanded young

Hunter, fiercely.
"What I say," rejoined Mr. Fitch. "An elderly lady, rich and respectable, has taken charge of her; and, my boy, we shall never see her any more."

"I mean to see her, anyhow, and learn why she never answered my letters. give me her address, Mr. Fitch, please."

Mr. Fitch shook his head. "I can't do it, my boy. I am bound in honour not to say. And what good would it do you? Go your way and forget each other."

But the young man would not hear of such an end to his attachment. could make no impression upon Mr. Fitch. Day after day he came to his studio hoping against hope, to see the adjoining door opened, and to hear Olive's fresh young

voice singing at her work. But the place remained silent and deserted. He had nothing in the way of a clue to guide him. No one at the Pottery had heard a word from her since she left. He sought her in all her former haunts and among her old companions in vain.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE morning when Mr. Fitch was immersed in a cloud of tobacco-smoke in his wife's little bureau, nominally engaged in putting her accounts into order, one of the girls in some confusion announced a visitor, a certain General Hunter. The General was small and rather wizened, with a wrinkled, good-natured face, and he took his seat encompassed by light articles of clothing, white, and newly starched—as Mr. Fitch afterwards observed, like a cherub among the clouds.

"I wait upon you, Mr. Fitch," began the General, politely, "on behalf of my son. I will own to you frankly at the outset, that it is not quite among such surroundings—charming as they may be—that I should have expected him to look for a wife. But I find that his affections are irrevocably engaged. And as I said to Edward, if the young lady be—as I have no doubt she is—good and amiable, and her parents—as I have no doubt they are—honest, respectable people, I shall not be found the stern, unforgiving parent."

"Exactly," replied Mr. Fitch, a little irritated by the General's extreme politeness. "But that is just what I am. And as such, I have already vetoed your son's pretensions."

"Here we come to the point," rejoined the General, with veteran coolness. "My son demands the opportunity of hearing from the young lady herself what she thinks of his pretensions; and I am told that you refuse him this opportunity."

"So I do; and so I mean to do," replied

Mr. Fitch, aggressively.

"Then, by Heaven," cried the General,
"I believe that you have some evil purpose
in concealing your daughter, if she be your
daughter. Come, sir, who are you, an
escaped convict, or what? I don't believe
you are what you seem to be."

"I'll tell you who I am," said Fitch; "as good a man as you. I am George Bodankin at your service, late of the Foot Guards."

"Ha!" cried the General. "I have you there, my fine fellow. You don't

come that over me. I happen to know. George Bodankin died fifteen years ago. There was a paragraph in the newspapers about it. He was killed in a skirmish on the borders of Zululand while serving in the mounted police."

"Exactly," said Mr. Fitch, musingly.
"I remember concocting the paragraph with Ned Smith, a penny-a-liner, in the back parlour of a pub. I was apprehensive of former creditors, and I thought this little paragraph would put them off the scent."

"Upon my word," said the General, looking at Mr. Fitch with an expression of contemptuous pity; "I half believe you are George Bodankin. But, no. I did not rely upon newspaper paragraphs alone. I wrote to George Bodankin's sister, acquainting her with the purpose of my inquiry. She replied: 'I have every reason to believe that the paragraph as to my brother George is correct. His end, you will be glad to hear, was accompanied by sincere if tardy repentance."

"It runs in the family, that talent of lying," said old George, with a sneer. "But to end the matter, and convince you of my identity, I can show you a letter from dear Olivia, dated at the time the paragraph appeared, when, as it happened, we were in great distress; threatened with an execution among the flat-irons, and all that. I appealed to her for aid, and here in this drawer I have kept her reply ever since, as an example of sisterly kindness."

Mr. Fitch or, as he ought now, perhaps, to be called, George Bodankin, produced from a bundle of papers an old letter in faded ink and handed it to the General, who perused it with some emotion.

"I believe you now, George," he said at last, "and I am sorry for you. That lying paragraph of yours cost you ten thousand a year, for I fully intended to convey your father's estates to you had I known you were alive. But we must think of the young people now. After all, for some things I am glad. But tell me, where shall I find Olive?"

"You had better go and ask Miss Bodankin," said old George, gloomily.

CHAPTER V.

If the young summer was pleasant in London it was not unkindly at the Court. The chestnuts in Bushey Park had been seen in their glory of perfumed blossom

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for awhile, and had resumed their ordinary aspect; but trees were in full leaf, the sward in velvety softness, and sun and shade played charmingly about the old walls of red brick, and the breeze blew with delicious freshness. Miss Bodankin and Olive had just returned from a round of visits, and now they were to settle down quietly for the rest of the summer. Such, at least, was the elder lady's intention.

Olive had taken to gardening since she returned. There was a little strip of ground at her disposal, and the young gardeners of the establishment were ready and even eager to dig and delve for her, and bring her choice plants and seeds. And a little bit of ground she could call her own was more to the girl than acres upon acres of public gardens.

She was busy planting and arranging one morning when the shadow of something was thrown across the flower-bed, and, looking up, she saw a young man's head and shoulders appearing above the

low hedge of yew.

"This is a private garden, young man," said Olive, severely; and then she saw the dark eyes and brown face smiling at her, and she sprang joyously over the border. "Oh, come in, Ned," she cried; for it was her friend the sculptor. "I am so delighted to see anybody from the old place."

"Anybody would do, then ?" said Mr. Hunter, with a shade of dissatisfaction in his face. "But if you were so glad to see a body, why didn't you write to

him ?"

"I did write, Ned-a nice long letter, and I was quite hurt you didn't answer; but those foreign post-offices are to blame, no doubt. But we shall have all the more

to tell each other."

There was plenty to be told, no doubt, as the pair walked up and down the prim gravel walks, and out and about the formal alleys of box and yew. All that had happened aince they parted was talked over and discussed, and then Olive revealed her own little plan for the future.

"I'm so glad you came, Ned, for I want you to help me to run away. Not with you exactly, so do not look so shocked; but to run away home; back to my crust

of bread and liberty."

"You want that?" cried Ned, delighted. "What, back to the old studio, and to the roofs and chimney-pots, the sketching club and the workshop !"

"Yes, indeed, Ned. I am tired of all this vain show; and I have lost faith in Miss Bodankin."

"Still there is a better way than that, Olive, dear: let me take you away."

Further report of this conversation is not forthcoming; but it is to be supposed that some satisfactory result was arrived at, for, on the following day, there presented himself at Miss Bodankin's door a visitor whom she could not well refuse to see-no other than General Hunter himself.

The interview was a long and stormy The General had come with the olive branch in his hand. He had become aware that he had conveyed the Bodankin Estate to Miss Bodankin, misled by false representations. And he was advised that, on due proof of the circumstances before a court of law, the Court would probably order the conveyance to be cancelled, and the property restored to him. But he did not wish to take harsh measures. His son and Miss Bodankin's niece had formed a mutual attachment. Let Miss Bodankin provide handsomely for Olive, and settle the property so that at her death it should pass to them and their descendants. And with that arrangement he should be perfectly satisfied.

Miss Bodankin's rejoinder breathed war and defiance. She knew of no false pretences. She held the property, and she would hold it to the last gasp-to her last sixpence. If the General was prepared to ruin himself over the business, so was she; and as for a matrimonial alliance between her adopted niece, who was no relation in reality, and the General's son, she respectfully declined the proposition altogether. If Olive chose to leave her, she might leave her—she would leave as a beggar, without a rag to her back, for even her clothes were Miss Bodankin's

property.

There was nothing more to be said, and the General took his leave in some perplexity. Miss Bodankin's position was a strong one, and to assail it the General must jeopardise everything he had in the But the effect of the interview upon Miss Bodankin had been mysterious. She felt that some relentless Nemesis was Her legal position might be upon her. strong, but what was her moral one? How if unseen judges were at hand, who could read the heart, and to whom the voices of the dead might be raised in evidence? Miss Bodankin half resolved to put the

seas between her and the imaginary accusers; but she felt too much shaken and unnerved to make the effort. She took to her bed in the room with the stately carvings and old oak chimneypiece, and she sent for her medical adviser, but would see no one else.

Again the doctor found Miss Bodankin rather feverish, prescribed a draught and pill, and promised to call again next day. Miss Bodankin ordered her maid to sit up with her, and, soothed with the thought of having taken all necessary precautions, fell

into a heavy slumber.

In the dead of the night Miss Bodankin awoke with a start. Something had slammed downstairs, and disturbed her. She sat up in bed and listened attentively. Her maid was snoring gently, fast asleep by her bedside. No other sound could be heard, till, presently, creak, creak-she fancied she heard a footstep on the oaken stairs. Miss Bodankin was not one to be frightened with shadows. If there were anything to face she could face it. But a tremor came over her which she could not check, and though she strained every nerve to vanquish it, the tremor seemed to master her, and hold her in its grip.
"I expected it!" she cried. "It is all

a delusion. That foolish story has put it

into my head."

But though she tried to speak boldly, she could not hear her own voice. And there against the black oaken mantelpiece rested the two red hands; but this time they were not crossed, but clasped. And, strive as she could, there was no avoiding

the sight of them.

Next morning the doctor was sent for in haste. Miss Bodankin was shaking like a leaf, and was talking, as her attendant thought, incoherently. She was collected enough, however, to tell the whole story to the doctor, who laughed at her pleasantly about it, but noted it in his own mind as a serious symptom; and when Miss Bodankin told her people to send for her lawyer, he told them privately that not a moment should be lost. And then Miss Bodankin sent for Olive, who was very anxious and distressed, and bade her telegraph for her father.

By the time the quondam Mr. Fitch arrived, the lawyer had come and gone, and the doctor was again in attendance, for Miss Bodankin had become suddenly worse. She was almost speechless when her brother came to her bedside, but she

"I did rob you, George, forgive me; but you were your own worst enemy."

"I forgive you, Livie," replied George Bodankin, sobbing. "I've been a happier man than if I'd had your thousands."

Miss Bodankin's last will and testament, which had been made a few hours before her death, left all she possessed, with the exception of a few legacies to faithful servants, to her niece, Olive Bodankin, otherwise known as Fitch. And no one was found to dispute that disposition of her property. But nobody could accuse General Hunter's son of being a fortunehunter, when he married the rich Miss Bodankin.

As for old George, he had no mind, even if he had been able, to resume his former position in the world. His "missus" would not have felt at home in the upper circles of society, nor perhaps would George himself, whose tastes did not lie in that direction. But Mrs. Fitch had saved a nice little sum of money; and she sold her business advantageously, and with her husband retired to a little farm down Harpenden way, where it is said George owns a promising colt or two, and some famous prize stock in the way of cows and pigs, the gift of his loving daughter, who often runs down to see how they are all getting

As for the Hunters, although they possess an old house in the country to which they occasionally repair, yet their chief affection is for the slates and chimney-pots. And they have just purchased that capital mansion, not very far westward of the old studios, formerly occupied by the celebrated Apelles Robinson, completely fitted up with studios, workshops, and galleries, where there is a fine collection of marble as yet unworked, and with every facility for exercising the sculptor's art. One little room, which is especially Mrs. Hunter's, is almost encrusted with specimens of modern English pottery, most of them the gifts of, as well as designed by, the girls in Milbank's Pottery on the occasion of their old comrade's marriage. And with her husband's approval, Mrs. Hunter has founded several handsome scholarships for girls in training for any of the arts and

And so it happened that Miss Bodankin did more good after her death, than she had ever thought of doing in her life, and recognised him at once and faltered out: | all owing to the Cardinal's Hands.

A COLD CHRISTMAS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of " Gerald," " Alexia," " Red Towers," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

Poor little Mrs. Tom Featherstone, small, pale, plain, and melancholy, stood at her window one Christmas Eve, looking out into a snowstorm. Twilight was coming on; all the air was thick with snow; only the nearer slopes of the great park were visible, and the large oaks and

beeches looked grim and grey.

The fire lighted up a rather large and dismal room, furnished in the gorgeous taste of thirty years ago, with a great deal of gilding and blue satin. Mrs. Featherstone had her associations with the room, for she had been born in it. Her father, having made an immente fortune in the Potteries, had bought West Hall, in the beautiful country which lies not far from the scene of his triumphs, and had decorated it to please his young wife. His son and daughter were both born there. Afterwards, his wife found it too dull, and he bought another large place in Kent. He died, and his wife died, while they were still middle-aged people. West Hall was left to their daughter Charlotte, and the house in Kent to their son William; each having also a very large fortune in money.

William, an excellent fellow, found it necessary to watch over his sister with a great deal of care; for she was a weak girl, and easily influenced. No one could admire poor Charlotte much; and it appeared to William so unlikely that any man could honestly fall in love with her, that he made up his mind she had better not marry at all. He himself, having married young, had already three or four children; thus there would be no difficulty in finding channels-natural, and reasonable, and right-through which Charlotte's

money might flow.

But, about eighteen months before this Christmas Eve, William's calculations had all been upset, and his opinion of his sister lowered to a distressing degree, by the greatest piece of weakness, combined with obstinacy, that she had ever com-Tom Featherstone proposed to her, and she accepted him, and held to her foolish choice, in spite of all William could say. Tom was handsome, interesting,

brought romance and sunshine into Charlotte's colourless life. All her relations were matter-of-fact people, contented in a placid, Dutch sort of way, having everything that money could give them, and wanting no more. In Charlotte, as Tom Featherstone was clever enough to perceive, there were capacities beyond this. She was shy, sensitive, generous; if once her love was gained, there were no limits as to what she would do for the object of it. So this ruined gambler, this hard block of selfishness with a soft outside, made love successfully to Charlotte, and for three months—two before her marriage and one after it—the heiress was perfectly happy. They had spent last winter on the Riviera; it was at Cannes that Tom's perfections had first begun to fade.

When her husband had proposed spending this second Christmas at her old home, West Hall, she had consented in the weary way that had become a sort of habit with her now. She had now the manner of a very stupid woman; duller even than when she was a shy, self-conscious girl. The poor nature, which had been kept in a hot-house for a few weeks, and then had flowered into such passionate happiness that her old friends hardly believed it could be Charlotte, was now fading fast away in this freezing outside air. Her eyes and cheeks had grown bright; they were now pale and dull; she had grown thin, lately, and stooped a little; her clothes no longer interested her, and she had taken to dressing badly. What could it matter, if Tom did not notice what she wore! The poor soul had a piteous way of watching him, a sort of incredulous look, as if she could not quite believe in her unhappiness. She was so like a dog in disgrace, that the sight of her, one day, made her brother quite furious, and he vowed he would never go to see her again. It was too degrading, especially as, even now, a kind word or a smile from Tom would brighten her in a moment. seemed that she had no self-respect left, and hardly any individual life of her own.

Charlotte Featherstone stood at her window, chilly and sad-hearted, in a gorgeous gown with a great deal of red plush about it. She was thinking of the sunshine of last winter-how sweet and warming it was at first; then what a dreary glare it all became, when Tom began to be rough and indifferent. She had thought it all over and over again, in and a little younger than herself; he a morbid sort of way, till she was quite

sure, not being accustomed to make friends, or to interest herself in other people's lives, that no woman had ever before been so unhappy. Yet, even now, she went on telling herself that Tom had cared for her once. That she knew, nothing could alter that; no one could take away those three months out of her life. Perhaps his coldness was her own fault; she was perhaps too shy, too stupid, to keep his love when she had it. Not pretty enough? and yet he used to say-she turned away from the window-from the pitiless, driving snow-and walked up to a large glass and looked at herself. sight was not satisfactory; and she turned away from it after a moment, and, after wandering round the room, came and stood by the fire.

"I suppose I have gone off very much," she said to herself. "Well—he was in love with me once—and perhaps, if I could only manage to be cheerful and

jolly—but it is so hard !"

At this point in her reflections somebody knocked gently at the door, then opened it, and Tom Featherstone came in. He had a folded paper in his hand, and the quick glance that he darted round the room was an odd contrast, somehow, to the deliberateness of his other movements. He did not look like a brute. He was a tall, slight man, rather dark and pale, with the sort of face and look that some people call "interesting." He could look very cold, sardonic, and unpleasant, or very eager and delightful. He was a person who always knew his own mind, and when he had a special object in view, he devoted all his faculties, without any reserve, to that object. Thus, for instance, his love-making had been first-rate of its kind; and if he had not succeeded equally well in his other gambling speculations, this probably was because personal charm had not so much to do with them.

"Oh, there you are!" he said. "Alone

for once."

"I think I generally am alone," said

Mrs. Featherstone.

"You always have a lot of maids and people about. Look at the weather; snowing hard. Those fellows won't be able to get here on Monday; all the roads will be snowed up, if the line isn't blocked. My shooting-party is knocked on the head, I think."

"I'm very sorry."

She stood, pale and cold, looking into the fire. He came close to her, speaking hands were tightly joined together.

and moving gently; but with the hard, quick look in his eyes which seemed to belie the rest of his appearance.

"Well, are you pleased?" he said, after

a moment of silence.

She looked up at him, and there was something pathetic in her eyes which only made him a little impatient.

"Pleased ?" she repeated.

"Don't you remember telling me, one day at Cannes, when we were there first, that you would like to spend Christmas at West Hall?" he said, rather hurriedly, with an unmoved face,

"Oh yes," she said, wondering. "Yes but——" she stopped, for she knew by sad experience that nothing irritated Tom so much as any appeal to the past, even

if he had himself led up to it.

"Well, here we are; you have got your wish," he said. "Now I want to speak to you. Sit down. I have been thinking that you would like to give me a Christmas present—and so you had better know what I want."

Charlotte could hardly understand the curious frozen feeling that came over her while he talked. She sat down by the fire, unconsciously obeying him. She was always thinking, poor thing, that happiness might come back some day, and expecting it at unlikely moments. The mere miserable facts of Tom having come specially to her room to look for her, of his alluding to last winter, of his asking for a Christmas present, might have had some hope in them, if it had not been for his hard, business-like manner. That frightened her, and made her feel more like an image than ever.

"Yes, Tom," she said. "What do you

want ? "

"I have been losing money lately, and I want some more," he said. "I shall be all right in a few months; but I am rather hard up now, and, thanks to William, I can't get at any decent sum of money without your consent. There are those thirty thousand pounds in Dock Shares, which you can sell out if you choose, and make over to me. If you will sign this paper, the thing is done. I can settle the rest."

Tom Featherstone said all this deliberately, standing on the hearthrug, and looking down at his boots. After a few moments, as his wife made no reply, he gave her a quick glance. She was very pale, her eyes were cast down, and her hands were tightly joined together. She was rather a painful spectacle, frightened and stony. It was too hard on him, Tom justly considered, to depend for supplies on a woman like that. As she did not move or speak, he suddenly walked across the room, lifted a small writing table from its place in a corner, carried it to the fire, and put it down beside her chair. Then he unfolded his paper and laid it on the table, dipped a pen in the ink, and stood waiting. No look, no answer, no movement from his wife.

"Come, you may as well sign," he said, feeling proud of his patience and politeness. "I'm really in a hole, and I shall be awfully obliged to you." As this appeal was without visible effect, he went on: "Don't be a screw. You have more money than you know what to do with, and if any one has a right to it, surely I have. If your relations had not been so preciously careful, it would all have been mine long ago. You would have given every penny into my hands when we married."

"Yes, you are right; I should," said

Charlotte, very quietly.

"Then what on earth is to hinder you

from making me a present now?"

"You were satisfied then; you did not seem to want it then," she murmured. "It was so different—don't you remember? It was not the money you cared about then."

"Wasn't it?" he said, with a cold little laugh, irritation getting the better of prudence. "You really are an innocent person. What did you suppose I cared about, if not the money?"

Mrs. Featherstone's pale face flushed crimson, and her eyes actually flashed as she looked up at him, so that he was

almost startled.

"You said——" but something seemed to choke her, and she could not go on.

"Said!" he repeated, laughing again.
"One says a good deal; the question is, what does one mean?" And then Mr. Tom checked himself, realising that his candour was carrying him a little too far. "Come, Charlotte," he said, with matter-of-fact crossness, "what is the use of our quarrelling like two babies over a few thousand pounds? Sentiment is out of the question, and the past is over and done with; better not rake things up now. Don't make a fool of yourself; behave like a reasonable woman; and sign this paper."

Again there was one of those provoking

pauses. Then she said :

"You married me for my money, and nothing else. I was cheated; I was deceived. Oh, I know I am very stupid; but one cannot understand these things."

"My dear, what do you suppose heiresses like you are generally married for?"

said her husband, patiently.

She sat crouched in her chair, hiding her face in her hands. It struck him that the room was dark; he lighted two candles, and put them on the writing-table. Then he spoke to her again.

"There's no hurry about understanding; you will have plenty of time for that. What you have got to do now, is to sign

this paper."

It seemed as if she did not hear him. After waiting a moment, he went nearer to her, and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Come, don't keep me here all the

evening," he said.

She got up quickly, shaking off his hand as if it was something venomous.

"There, that's right; don't be a fool,"

he said. "Put your name here."

A strange, new strength seemed to have come to the little woman in this depth of her misery. She had conquered the terrible agitation which had seized upon her, and she spoke to her husband quite calmly, standing there by the fire.

"No," she said, "I am not going to sign

that paper."

"Why not?"

"I do not choose to give you thirty thousand pounds of my money to gamble away. If you thought that by lying and cheating you would get everything you wanted, you were mistaken. I did love you once—yes, and trusted you, and would have given you everything—life itself; but now I don't love you any more, and will not. You may get money for your amusements in any way you can—not from me."

"But you must obey me! And if I order

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you to sign this paper-"

Charlotte smiled, and shook her head.
"I don't know how you will make me

obey you," she said.

Tom afterwards thought that he had been a great fool, and reproached himself for not having tried persuasions and soft means from the beginning. They would have bored him very much, but they were the only way to manage Charlotte. He had, however, never dreamed of her refusing his request, so that he was unprepared for such an emergency, and his

impatience had betrayed him into the brutal candour which seemed to have ruined his cause.

He took a few turns up and down the room, thinking over the matter. At last

he came back to his wife.

"Look here," he said, "you will think better of this by-and by. You are in an infernal temper with me at this moment, because you have expected too much, and generally made a fool of yourself. I am going away now, and shall take the paper with me. You will stay in this room till you change your mind. It will be understood that you have a bad headache, and want nothing to eat. When you come to your senses, and feel rather hungry, you can ring the bell. The paper and I will then come back; you will sign; and it will be all right."

Charlotte made no answer, but turned her back upon him. After waiting a moment, he took up his paper; went out of the room with his usual light, quiet step;

and shut and locked the door.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. FEATHERSTONE knew that her husband did not expect her resistance to last very long. She also knew that he did not understand her in the least—that he reckoned entirely without the hidden obstinacy and strength which lay at the

foundation of her character.

Charlotte, slight and pale as she looked, was a hardy woman; she thought she could bear a good deal of starvation. All her merbid passion and brooding was over now; she felt like a block of ice. Thinking over the situation calmly and coolly, she told herself she would rather die than yield to Tom now. He might have the satisfaction of starving her, but never, never of seeing her sign that paper, and then of laying hands on the coveted thirty thousand pounds. And she saw no way out of her difficulty, except through starvation. Tom had taken away the key. Her room was high up in the rambling old house, which was very lonely, very far away from outside help, especially in this world of snow. He could not have chosen a better place for extorting his Christmas present.

There she sat by the fire till the dressingbell rang. The uncurtained windows grew dark; the fire went down, and the room was cold; but she did not move, or take any notice of these things. The bell re-

called her to this present world, however, and still more the footstep on the stairs, and the knock at the door, which followed it. It was her maid, and now some explanation was necessary. She had never liked her maid much; neither were any of the servants fond of their mistress, who was cold, inconsiderate, and rather haughty in manner. Mr. Featherstone was more popular in the household than his wife.

Charlotte felt that it would be a certain degradation to confide in her maid, and determined to play the part that Tom had arranged for her; to be unwell, and to want nothing. After the knock had been repeated twice, she went towards the door and spoke; the pain and strain in her voice seemed to corroborate her words.

"I don't want anything, Meacham," she said. "I am not well; I am not coming

down to dinner."

"Won't you take anything, ma'am? Can't I do anything for you?" asked the maid.

" No, thank you, nothing."

"Shall I tell Mr. Featherstone, ma'am ?"

"Mr. Featherstone knows."

She said no more; and the maid, after waiting a minute, went wondering away.

As her retreating steps sounded on the stairs, Charlotte felt a sudden desolation which was almost unbearable. Had she sent away her only chance of help? Would not Tom be shamed out of his cruel, cowardly behaviour, if the servants knew of it? But then again she despised herself

for the thought.

Walking round the room in a sudden restlessness, she noticed, almost with a start, a white heap on a side-table. Earlier in the day she had been packing up Christmas cards; it had been rather a depressing business, reminding her of old days and old friends, of people and things that used to matter a good deal in her life before Tom Featherstone came on the The cards were all ready, all directed, but not stamped or fastened down; there was also a parcel, a book of German Christmas pictures, which she was sending to William's little boy. William was angry with her, it was true; but she was the child's godmother; and she meant to do much more for him than William now These pictures had attracted expected. her; though by a modern artist, they were quaint and mediæval in style, and that very day she had spent some time turning them

of pleasure, wrapped up the book in paper, and tied it with string. Those pictures had brought something of the old forgotten Christmas feeling to her heart, though they had not made her any happier, or the sorrow of her life any easier to bear.

[November 15, 1888.]

"I suppose he will let my cards go to the post," she thought; and then, as she glanced over them, the idea came: "Could I get at William? Could I put in a note any-

where ? "

But then, was it necessary? Was it really possible, after all, that Tom seriously meant to persecute her in this way? She walked about the room a little more, asking herself questions, before she determined to ask her brother for help. And then, so cautious had the poor thing grown, so distrustful of the man who had deceived her, that she would not fasten down any of those envelopes lying there. Tom would probably examine them before they left the house.

She went back to the fire, to her writingtable, and wrote a note to the small child,

her nephew.

"DEAR LITTLE WILL, -Your poor Aunt Lotty wishes you a happier Christmas than she is having herself. You can't than she is having herself. You can't imagine anything so strange. She can't go out of her room, and she can't have any dinner on Christmas Day. Wouldn't you like to send her some of yours? She does not think she will ever see you again, except some day, if we ever get to heaven, where all the pretty angels in your book come from. Ask your father what he thinks about it, and whether the snow is too deep on the way to West Hall.

"Your loving aunt, "CHARLOTTE FEATHERSTONE."

Having written this, Charlotte unpacked her book and laid the note open between the leaves, on the picture she thought the Even then, with some odd remnant of the happy sentiment of childhood, she lingered over those quaint upright angels with their musical instruments.

"If the child helps me out of this," she said, "I will leave him everything I have," and then she carefully tied up the parcel again. Then the dinner-bell rang; and then, as she had half expected, Tom's well-

known step came up to the door.
"Are you better?" he said. "Are you

coming down ? "

"No," she answered; and her voice sounded, even to herself, like some hard, strange voice she did not know. "But come in, please. I want to speak to you." looked up, and saw the stars; the snow had

He instantly unlocked the door and came in, his precious paper still in his

"I thought you would be more reasonable soon," he was beginning; but a scornful little movement from her silenced

him.

"I am not even hungry yet," she said. "I want you to send my cards to the post, and this picture book for little Will. You see they are all open-and they want stamps,'

He took the pile of envelopes into his hand and glanced over the directions.

"None for your brother?"

"Do you think William would care for a

Christmas card from me?"

"Well, he is just the sort of fellow who would like to shake hands all round at Christmas time. Your own notion seems to be quite the contrary. You will very soon have quarrelled with everybody belonging to you."

"Perhaps Will's picture-book may just prevent that," she said, without looking

at him.

"An olive-branch. And you won't

oblige me yet, then ?"

"I am ill. I told Meacham so, when she came to the door. Please take my things for the post, lock the door, and leave me alone."

"I don't know that the postman will come," he said, "the snow is getting so deep. And they are sure not to get the All the things to-morrow, you know. trains will be late to-night to begin with."

"I dare say they will," she answered,

"and your soup will be cold."

He stood a moment with his hand on the door, staring at her.

"Charlotte, you are a fool! You don't really mean to starve yourself rather than sign that paper?"

She was silent.

"You won't have anything, you know. The servants will bring you nothing—do you understand?" As she made no sign -"That money I must and will have, and if I can't get it by fair means I will by foul. I swear I will."

"Thanks. I quite understand you," she said, very coldly. "At least, go away

and leave me in peace."

Then he left her and ran downstairs. The hours went on, and she sat alone by her fire. Once she went to the window and opened it, and put out her hand into the cold, wet snow piled on the sill. She

ceased falling, and the clouds were rolling away. She thought dreamily whether she could escape from this house, steal away through the snow, find her way through the park, over those lonely hills, down the deep, dark lanes that lay between West Hall and the outer world. But though she had her share of endurance, she was a timid woman, unaccustomed to braving the weather; and she also dreaded the thought of being pursued and caught. Besides, how was she to escape from this locked room ?

About ten o'clock her maid came again and knocked at the door.

"You can go, Meacham," she said, "I

don't want anything."

"Won't you let me in, ma'am?" said Meacham, who was beginning to be a little frightened by her mistress's behaviour, realising vividly all the things she must want, whether ill or well. "There must be coals wanted. I'm sure." she went on. "Won't you let Sarah come in, ma'am, and make up the fire?"

"No; I want nothing," said Mrs.

Featherstone's voice from within,

It crossed her mind to wonder whether Tom had calculated on the power of cold, as well as that of starvation; but she was quite resolved that no one should ask him for the key.

Meacham went away; but she thought it her duty to go to her master, and to tell him she was afraid there was something serious the matter. Mrs. Featherstone had locked herself in; she would take nothing; she would not even let the maids come into the room.

"All right," said Tom, behind his news-"You can go to bed, Meacham. know all about it. Your mistress will ring

if she wants anything."

The household gathered from all this that there had been a very bad quarrel, and that Mrs. Featherstone, whose temper was at all times none of the best, had shut herself up in a tremendous fit of sulks.

Though poor Charlotte had not the satisfaction of knowing it, her cards and her picture-book had gone safely to the post. But they did not make much way that night, for the snow had drifted into the tunnels, in that cold and hilly country; so that Master Will Hartley, at his cheerful breakfast the next morning, announced that Aunt Lotty had forgotten all about

"Poor Aunt Lotty! I wonder if she is

Uncle Tom at West Hall!" said little Will's father.

"Perhaps the snow's so deep that she can't get any breakfast, and perhaps it's so cold that she's lost her memory," suggested Will, whose father and mother thought him a child of remarkable imagination.

CHAPTER III.

THAT was a strange Christmas Day. It began with a sharp frost, so that the roads were almost impassable, and the post was very late in reaching West Hall. Tom Featherstone went up to his wife's room with a bundle of letters in his hand, when he had finished his own comfortable break-All the morning, like the servants, he had been listening rather nervously for her bell. He began to be conscious that this was an uncomfortable business, that Charlotte was showing a side of her character he had not suspected, and that he was making rather a fool of himself by treating her in this way. At the same time he was inclined to hold on as long as possible, being very unwilling to lose the chance of the money.

Her room looked miserable enough, when he unlocked the door and went in. It was in disorder; the fire was out; the white glare of frost and snow streamed in at the Charlotte, in her red gown, was windows. standing at one of the windows, tracing the frost patterns with her finger, like a

child. "Well, have you repented?" said Tom. "Here are a lot of letters for you." As she did not turn round, or answer, he walked up to the window. "Come, this joke has gone far enough," he said. " Do what I ask you, and come down to breakfast. What do you mean by going on like this ?"

"Thanks; I don't want any breakfast. The joke may go a little farther," she said, with such a cold ring in her voice, that it might have come from one of the icicles

"What are you waiting for? Do you think I shall give in? Look here, Charlotte," he said, his tone softening a little, "I thought you were fond of me. I never expected this sort of thing, you know."

"I may have had my thoughts, too, once upon a time," said Mrs. Featherstone.

"You drive me to be disagreeable," said the injured Tom.

He went on arguing for some minutes, enjoying herself, snowed up with dear keeping his temper admirably, and speaking with so much moderation, that no one would have guessed him to be guilty of starving his wife into surrender. Her coldness, however, added to the chill of the fireless room, was soon too much for

"One can't talk in this ice-house," he "Come down with me, a jolly fire in the dining-room. Come down and have your breakfast, and sign the paper there."

"I will not sign the paper,"

Charlotte.

There was a doggedness in her tone

which made him flush with anger.

"Then you don't want any breakfast," he said. "Very well. But you need not be frozen, so I shall send for them to light the fire.'

A moment afterwards Mrs. Featherstone's bell pealed loudly, to the sincere relief of Meacham, who found this sort of thing quite too much for her nerves. As she hurried upstairs, followed by the housemaid, she met her master coming down.

"How is my mistress, sir?" she asked,

anxiously.

"No better. She will have nothing to But the door is open, and you can go in and light the fire," answered Tom.

"Well, I'm sure-I began to be afraid there was something wrong with her head," muttered Meacham, as he passed on.

But when she reached her mistress's door, it was shut, and Mrs. Featherstone answered to her knock:

"You can go away; I don't want any-

thing."

Meacham could not help trying the handle of the door.

"Won't you have the fire lit, please,

ma'am ?"

"No. You need not try the door; I have bolted it," answered Mrs. Feather-

stone from within.

"If she likes to punish herself, she can," was Tom's reflection, when he found that he, as well as the servants, was shut out from his wife's room. "No doubt she'll come round in time. She won't hold out for ever. But who could have guessed that that quiet little creature had such an infernal temper of her own !"

He could pay her no more visits, and waste no more arguments, without breaking open the door, and he did not wish for the scandal that this would occasion among the servants. He thought with some satisfaction that she was doing for herself in

not believe that she was quite in her right mind. He thought that, with a little more patience, he was tolerably sure of his thirty

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thousand pounds.

He went quietly upstairs again and locked the door, having kept the key in his possession all the time. He stood for a moment, listening, but all was dead silence within the room. His prisoner was no doubt safe, however, and he went back with renewed resolution to his comfortable

So that Christmas Day passed, a heathen day enough at West Hall. Yet, perhaps, the angels may have felt some pity for that wretched little soul in her cold, gorgeous room; half-frozen, mentally as well as physically, in misery that might have found some desperate way of ending itself, but for a little faint hope in a distant child and his book of Christmas pictures, and a faith beyond that in an uninteresting brother's love.

There was no more snow, but the frost continued through that day and night, and through all the next day. Neither was there any change in the circumstances at West Hall. Mrs. Featherstone did not ring her bell, and did not unbolt her door. Her husband did not trouble himself, that second day, to go near her room at all only Meacham, who was beginning to feel seriously frightened, went and listened there constantly. When she spoke to her mistress, the answer was always the same: "I want nothing." Latterly the voice was a little smothered, and seemed to come from the direction of the bed. At last, late at night, there was no answer at all, and after waiting a few minutes, afraid to make a noise, the maid hurried down to the library, where Mr. Featherstone was reposing in front of a large fire, smoking, with various bottles at his elbow, and a French novel in his hand.

Meacham walked into the room and stood before him. All her good feelings were aroused on behalf of her mistress, whose state she thought her master could not possibly realise. His indifference was too evident.

"If you please, sir, I think it is my duty to speak," began the maid, stiffly. "I don't like the responsibility of my mistress being shut up like this."

"It is her own doing," replied Tom. "She will ring when she wants anything."

"Excuse me, sir," persisted Meacham; "but it ought not to be allowed to go on. their opinion; Meacham certainly could Two nights and two days has Mrs. Featherstone been shut up there, without fire or food—and when I went to the door just now, and spoke to her as usual, she didn't answer, and I could hear nothing."

Some sort of change came over Tom's face. "He looked ever so wicked, and frightened too," Meacham told her fellows afterwards.

"Asleep, most likely," he said. "She bolted herself in, you know; it was her own doing. I can't help it; it is no use coming to me. You see, yourself, she won't let me into the room, any more than you."

"If Mrs. Featherstone is left there longer, sir, she will be ill from cold and hunger," said Meacham, very solemnly; and her manner would have made the most stupid person understand both her sus-

picions and her fears.

Suddenly, in the silence of that frosty night, there was a noise outside of wheels and horses' feet crunching the ice and snow. In another moment the great doorbell pealed through the house, ringing long and loud, as if the person who pulled it expected the household to be asleep. At the first sound Mr. Featherstone started violently in his chair.

"What's that?" he said.

He looked just then so savagely angry, that Meacham thought it best to retreat for the present. She escaped into the hall, where an additional element of mystery—to her a most comforting one—was being let in at the heavy old door. It was the sturdy, solid, good-humoured Mr. William Hartley, who stepped quietly into the house, saying to the butler:

"Is Mr. Featherstone at home? How

is Mrs. Featherstone ?"

The butler stared, and hesitated. Meacham, in the background, clasped her hands together for joy, and had almost rushed forward to pour out her anxieties, when she was silenced by the appearance of her master. He came out of the library, looking curiously white, but his manner was quite easy and agreeable.

"This is unexpected," he said, shaking hands with William. "Glad to see you. You must have had a beastly journey. Come in and get warm. Dinner, Roberts,"

he called out to the butler.

William glanced at him rather cautiously, came into the library, and looked round for

"What has brought you in this weather?" asked Tom, regarding him with a kind of puzzled stare.

"Well," said William, "I had a few days to spare, and Charlotte said, some months ago, that she hoped I would run down some day, and I thought I should like to see old West Hall again. But it has been a cold journey, certainly."

"Why didn't you telegraph?"

"Well—I knew you were here, you see, and I thought it didn't matter, and I should have been here three hours ago, if the line had not been in such a state. Never knew it so bad. Where is Charlotte; gone to bed?"

"I rather think she has," said Tom.
"The fact is, she has not been quite well
the last few days, and has kept upstairs a
good deal. So I'm living bachelor fashion,
you see. I'll go and tell her you are

come."

"Don't disturb her," said William; but Tom insisted, and left him there by the

fire

Stepping lightly to his wife's door, Tom listened there for a moment with some anxiety. William's most enraging arrival had followed so closely on the warning hints of Meacham, that he had hardly taken them in. Now—" suppose anything has happened!" flashed through his mind very uncomfortably. However, he was reassured by hearing certain soft movements within the room. He knocked gently at the door, and then said, through the keyhole:

"Charlotte, are you up ?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Come down at once, then. Your brother is come. By-the-bye, did you expect him?"

"How should I? I have not heard from him for weeks."

He could make nothing out of the low, even voice, which seemed to have no feeling in it of any kind. He could see that there was candle-light in the room. He unlocked the door and knocked again.

"Will you let me come in ?"

" No."

"Look here. I can't speak outside here; but suppose we forget all about this stupid affair. You had better have a cup of tea, or something, before you come down."

" No, thank you."

As Tom went downstairs he had time for one or two thoughts on the subject of his future conduct. "I must make it up with her," he thought. "I must get round her again somehow, and pretend it was all a joke. I don't think she will tell William—not to-night, at least."

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On his way downstairs he met Meacham, hurrying up.

"You can go to your mistress, now," he said. "She is coming down to see her brother."

Meacham's suspicions were confirmed by finding the key in the lock on the outside; Mr. Tom had been a little thoughtless in leaving it there. But this made it none the easier to get into Mrs. Featherstone's room, for the door was still bolted, and she would not open it.

"Thank you. I have everything I

want," she said.

Twenty minutes later, when William, partly reassured, and very hungry, was sitting down to his dinner, the dining-room door opened slowly, and Charlotte walked in. She was dressed in her red gown, trimmed with plush; it looked too large for her shrunken little figure. Her eyes were burning and shining; her face was as white as death, except a small scarlet spot on each cheek. She came in gravely, and stood still, like a little statue; staring, not at William, who got up to meet her; not at Tom, who stood motionless on the hearthrug—but at the food on the table.

Then she screamed some unintelligible words-the butler, who followed her into the room, declared afterwards that they were "Give me some soup"-and fell down unconscious, in a sad little red heap

upon the floor.

Tom stood as if he were frozen; the maid, who had been lying in wait outside, rushed in from the hall, and William Hartley turned furiously upon his brother-in-law.

"You scoundrel, what have you been

doing to my sister?"

That terrible Christmas, with its torture of body and mind, was followed for Charlotte by a long and dangerous illness, from which her friends thought that she would never quite recover. But she very slowly struggled back to strength again, under William's kind roof, nursed by his wife, who now described her sister-in-law not as a fool, but as a heroine. The whole story was never very clearly told; for Charlotte, having half confided it one day to her brother, broke off short and would say no more; but he and his wife understood that it was an unprincipled attempt to extort money on the part of Tom Featherstone. They supported Charlotte strongly in her resolution never to live with her husband again, an arrangement to which Tom was forced to agree.

A few months later, when Christmas came round again, Charlotte Featherstone very nearly quarrelled with her faithful brother William, peace being only kept by the intervention of his wife, who generously took her part, and told him she was behav-ing nobly. The bone of contention was once more thirty thousand pounds, which this blinded and obstinate woman insisted on giving as a Christmas present to the man she had once loved.

After that, Charlotte Featherstone's spirits rose in a wonderful way; she became fat, benevolent, and fairly happy. Her nephew Will adores her, though he cannot quite understand why she does not like his pet Christmas picture-book with all the angels. Her faithful servant, Meacham, who means to live with her for the rest of her days, tells everybody the tragical story of that Christmas at West Hall, and states her conviction that a few hours more of cold, starvation, and agony, would have found Mrs. Featherstone lying dead, and Mr. Featherstone taken up "for manslaughter at least," says Meacham.

THE THREE MONKS.

BY SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

DEEP in a Tyrol valley the grey old Priory stood, Hard by a rushing river, at the edge of a great pine wood.

The Despots' laws and the Spoilers' sword, had been

hard on the brotherhood; But three old monks sang Matins now, at the foot of the Holy Rood;

But three old monks sang Vespers now, when the sighing south wind wooed The sunset to dazzle softly down, on the sylvan solitude.

Out from the pine-wood's shadow came the flock of mountain sheep, Their shepherd was piping to them, as they gathered

from noonday sleep; He sang as a careless youth will sing, as he came

his watch to keep, He sang to the streamlet as it rushed, down from the craggy steep. He sang to the rustle of the leaves, he sang to the

torrent's leap.
The old monks heard the mellow strains; they paused to smile, to weep.

They said, "our rites are poor and bare, our voices weak and old,

For the noble notes where the praise of God in the

Church's words is told; It is not that our high hopes falter, it is not that

our faith grows cold, But the strength in our hearts is passing, and few are left in the fold."

So they took from their scanty treasure chest of its

little store of gold,
That the boy, for hire, should chant the rites when
the chapel bell was tolled.

At dawn, and at noon, and at evensong, as the long days lingered by, Before the grey stone altar rose the rich young melody;

Rose up in long harmonious strains, up to the sum-And the three old monks knelt listening, with shut

lips and reverent eye,

A little sad that no more they dared the sweet old hymns to try;
A little glad that the Lord they loved should be praised so worthily.

At last, to each of the three old monks, at night a

vision came, An angel stood in either cell, and he called on each by name.

He looked on each with a gentle gaze, a gaze of loving blame.

He said, "From the chorus that rises up, from earth to the great white throne,
To blend with the song of seraphim, three precious

notes are gone !

The strains that are bought, in the heavenly choir

have neither space nor part; Our Lord has missed from His house built here, the music of the heart."

Humbled and happy the three old monks next morning sought the shrine,

Where, by feeble faithful fingers kept, stood the Lamp neath the solemn sign, They bade the merry mountain lad go back his

They bade the menty flocks to tend, And at Matins, and Prime, and Evensong, till Death called, a welcome Friend,

prayer to Him, Who only loves the praise of the heart to join

with His seraphim.

BRIGGS, JUNIOR.

By H. F. ABELL.

CHAPTER I.

"WHACK! whack! whack!" The sound of a merciless cane on a passive body; a most unorthodox sound with which to usher in Christmas morning; then exit from the study of the Reverend Donald McStinger-preceptor and Principal of the Tusculum House Academy for Young Gentlemen, situate at the village of Barncombe, in Devonshire-Master Samuel Briggs, very red-faced, his mouth compressed so that the lips were perfectly white, his little fists clenched until their knuckles were of the same colour, but with never a tear in his eye, and, considering the nature of the punishment he had undergone, walking with tolerable erectness and straightness.

"That will cure ye, ma fine young fellow, a' think," remarked the gentle preceptor of youth, a fiery-headed, pimply-faced little Scotsman, standing five foot nothing. "And that'll teach ye not to go tumbling into ponds where ye've no call to be."

Poor little Samuel Briggs! A fortnight previously he had seen his shouting, laughing, joy-maddened school-fellows whirlaway

in post-chaises for the Christmas holidays, his own cousin, Malthus Briggs, senior, amongst them; and had been left alone in the desolate, dripping, fog-laden playground with the prospect of spending five long weeks at Tusculum House.

This was in the year 1790. Briggs junior's father, Captain Julius Cæsar Briggs, had, a few months before, fallen gallantly at the head of his crew on board the French seventy-four "Soleil," and the little fellow had been left to the mercies of the Captain's brother, Malthus Briggs, a wealthy Bristol merchant who lived in grand state in a big house, and who was a type of the overbearing, purse-proud, successful trader. Young Malthus Briggs, son and heir of the great merchant, was, as has been said, also a pupil at Tusculum House. He was a pasty-faced, jowly boy of a gluttonous and usurious disposition, who hated and bullied his little cousin as an interloper and a starveling, and had in no small degree helped his father to decide that Briggs, junior, should remain at school during the Christmas holidays.

Briggs, junior, went out of the study and into the great bleak schoolroom; carefully shut the door after him; sat down at his own desk; and, unable to control his feelings any longer, buried his face in his hands and let the pent-up cry come out-bursting, bubbling, streaming forth in an irresistible torrent till it acoured the ink-stained desk, and, of course, his cuffs and poor little

red-chapped hands.

"There now! there now, Briggs, junior, there's a little lovey, don't! Don't cry He's a nasty, ill-tempered, redhaired little savage, he is, and I'd like to claw his ugly face, that I would!" said a gentle voice in his ear, whilst a pair of gentle hands disengaged his own from his

Briggs, junior, jumped up. A pretty, fresh-faced servant girl was standing by him, and the tears were in her eyes too.

"I'm-I'm not crying, Susan. It's all right-it's all right!" he gasped, and manfully tried to give the lie to his tear-stained cheeks and the sopping ball of his pockethandkerchief.

"No, of course not," said Susan. "You're a brave little man. Come along now. Your clothes are nearly dry, and I've something so nice to give you in the kitchen."

And with almost maternal tenderness she led him away into the domestic regions of Tusculum House.

The kitchen was decked with holly, and mistletoe, and evergreens, "although," as Susan said, "master said as how it was all nonsense making a mess and a litter just because it was Christmas time, and told us not to do it, which me and cook and the others said we'd give notice if we wasn't allowed to enjoy ourselves one day in the year." There was a mighty frizzing and steaming in the neighbourhood of the fireplace, and the stalwart Devonshire cook was bustling about, and three or four other maids were bustling about, all with red and shining faces, so that it was palpable that, at any rate, the domestics of Tusculum House were not going to be deprived of their Christmas fun.

"Lor, Master Briggs, junior!" said the jolly cook, wiping the perspiration from her face with her apron. "Has he been at 'un again? It's a shame says I, iss, it's a shame. But now sit ee down, Master Briggs, junior, and eat thicky mince pies, and never let me hear your voice until

they be both eat."

"And what made ee go tumbling into the Black Pond, Master Briggs, junior?" asked Susan, who was seated by Briggs.

"Well," said the youngster, as well as he could with a mouth full of mince-pie, "it was like this. There was a frost last night, and I thought the Black Pond might be strong enough to bear a little chap like me sliding. So I went to have a look, and I got there, and I was getting over the fence when I saw a little girl on the ice. She didn't see me, and I was glad, because I thought she might belong to the Hall, and Squire Adams is very strict about trespassing in the park. Well, and she was dressed in furs, and had a red hood on, and a red dress; and she had black eyes and curls; and she got on the middle all safe, when all of a sudden she tumbled down, and the ice broke and I couldn't see her. So-I ran on, and I got in and I pulled her out, but I thought we were both going to be drowned, for she clung so tight to me; but I got her out and laid her on the grass, and her eyes was shut and she was as white as snow. Then I rubbed her hands, and she opened her eyes, and presently she got up-at least I lifted her up, but she said she was all right, and she said, "Thank you, little boy," but I was as big as she was, and she gave me a penny which I didn't want to take, and then she ran off as her clothes was wet through, and-and that's

"And old Ginger thrashed you for it, did he?" said Susan. "That'll be little Miss Doris from the Hall, that's who it will be. Just let him tumble into the Black Pond, I wouldn't pull him out!"

"Nor me!" said the cook.

"Nor me!" echoed each of the other servants.

"But he doesn't know where I tumbled in," said Briggs, "and nobody mustn't know, not for anything, for Squire Adams is very particular, and says he'll put all boys in prison who trespass on his grounds."

Further discussion of the topic was interrupted by the loud ringing of a bell.

"The front-door bell," said Susan, and hurried away to answer it.

Presently she reappeared.

"Master Briggs, junior, there's a gentleman come to see the master, and will you please go up into the drawing-room. But wait—wipe them crumbs away, and let me straighten your hair a bit."

Thus prepared, Briggs, junior, ascended to the stately drawing-room, wherein were seated his master, and a large replica of Briggs, senior, in the shape of a corpulent gentleman with an unhealthy face and a brown wig, attired in a fur-lined coat thrown open so as to display a waistcoat of marvellous pattern, beneath which swung a large bunch of gold seals. This was, of course, the great Bristol merchant, Mr. Malthus Briggs.

"Samuel," said his uncle, "I came here with the intention of bringing you away to share in the festivities of the season at

Jamaica Lodge."

Strange to say, Briggs junior's face did not light up in the smallest degree at the prospect thus dangled before him.

"Well," said the great man; "have you

nothing to say ?"

As Briggs, junior, had nothing to say, he said nothing, but stood motionless, with his eyes fixed upon the carpet pattern.

"No! Well, as you do not seem disposed to express delight or thankfulness, I am relieved of a disagreeable duty. Your beloved preceptor here gives me a very unfavourable account of your conduct, and has hinted that a little wholesome solitude might bring you round to a proper frame of mind. It grieves me as much as I know it grieves him, but our path of duty is plain. Your cousin Malthus desires me to present you with a sixpence on his behalf, but—"

"I don't want Briggs senior's sixpences," said the hardened little sinner. Schoolmaster and uncle exchanged

glances of despair.

"Very well," said the great man of business, severely, "I shall report your message to Briggs, senior, as you call him, and I shall return him a donation he can ill afford, and I have no doubt that his gentle reproaches will fall on your head when you meet again next half."

Briggs, junior, had no two opinions about the falling of the reproaches upon him in due course; but whether they would be gentle, or whether they were likely to fall on his head, was a question the solution

of which he kept to himself.

"You can go, Briggs, junior," said his master.

And he went.

To do the reverend gentleman justice, he did not trouble his charge again that day, for he, in company with his rubicund better-half, and two rubicund female likenesses of his own image, drove off to keep the Christian festival in the company of fellow-countrymen at Exeter, and the junior Briggs was left to his own devices, an arrangement which suited him excellently.

He had his Christmas dinner in the kitchen, in spite of orders that he was to be served with that meal in the gaunt solitude of the schoolroom; and a capital dinner it was, with speeches, and toasts, and songs by members of the company, in which he played by no means an insignificant part, treating the company to "Dicky of Taunton Dean" in fine style, and showing the gardeners, and stable-boy, and the servants how to perform the chorus of "Auld Lang Syne," as he had many a time seen it performed by sailors on Bristol

Then when tobacco and something strong were introduced, Briggs junior's tact hinted to him the convenience of his departure, and, having thanked everybody for their

kindness, he started for a walk.

There were only two houses of note at Barncombe—Tusculum House, and Barncombe Hall, the residence of Sir Hercules Adams, an Exeter merchant of great wealth and acknowledged position, whose brother was Ranger of Exmoor, and whose family had lived about Totnes and Bowdon for centuries. Sir Hercules was very grand, and very proud, and very high and mighty generally. His Hall was a sort of select world of itself, shut in by broad acres of woodland, strictly preserved and jealously defended—by an army of keepers, and an array of traps and spring-guns and thun-

deringly-worded notice-boards—against the

incursions of the vulgar.

Towards one of the keepers' lodges Briggs, junior, went. He knew every one around — keepers, gardeners, coachmen, footmen, grooms with their wives and children — and was a universal favourite, for, although he was but a little ten-year-old schoolboy, there was something about him which, just as it disgusted the high and haughty, endeared him to the poor and simple. There was not one of them who would not have done anything to please the cheery little man.

It was getting dark as he reached the lodge, and Nature was dank and dismal enough; but through the red curtains of the lodge there streamed forth cheery light, and the silence outside was broken by sounds of song and laughter proceeding

from within.

Briggs, junior, hesitated; for, although only Briggs, junior, he was a little gentleman, and had a gentleman's reluctance to intrude where he was not wanted.

However, he knocked, and on receipt of a cheery "Come in!" timidly pushed the

door open.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," he stammered, as he found himself confronted by a party of men, women, and children, seated round a roaring fire, with a table laden with dessert handy.

"Come in, sir. Come in, Master Briggs, junior, sir, and welcome!" said half-a-dozen voices. "Very glad to see you o' Christmas night, sir. No, sir; no intrusion. Come

in!"

So Briggs, junior, entered, not a little abashed at the attention shown him, and deposited himself on the very edge of a chair which was set in the very centre of the company.

"I only came in to ask after the little girl who tumbled into the Black Pond this

morning," he said.

"That was Miss Doris, sir," replied the head keeper, "but was you the young gentleman that pulled her out, sir?"

"Why—I happened to be—but, Morris, you won't say anything about it to the Squire, will you?" said Briggs. "I was trespassing, you see, and he might——"

"If so be Squoire knew as how it was you what pulled Miss Doris out, sir, he'd do and say what I do: he'd shake your hand and call you a reg'lar out and outer, that he would. Squoire be a strict man, but he's just, and he dew love Miss Doris."

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And Mr. Morris shook Briggs junior's hand, and every one else followed his example, and then glasses were filled with port-wine negus and his health was drunk—probably for the first time in his life.

"She's all right, sir," said the keeper, when the ceremony was concluded. "Wet through, and a bit queer, but all right."

"You won't say anything about it, though," pleaded Briggs, whose terror of Squire Adams was only second to his dread of his schoolmaster.

Then they settled to singing and story-telling, but Briggs was all eyes and ears for his neighbour who was home on leave from the fleet at Plymouth, and who told such stories of fights and adventures, and sang such a rattling song about "Captain Edwards and the bold Benjamin O!" that Briggs, junior, felt an irresistible longing to start there and then for Dartmouth or Plymouth and offer his services.

"I tell you what, sir," said Bill Morris the quarter-master, "you're cut out for a sailor, you are, sir. Your father died for his King and country, nobly a-fightin' 'gin the foe, as the poem says, and you're the one to take his place."

"But they wouldn't take such a youngster

as me," said Briggs, junior.

"Lor! wouldn't they, though? Glad to get 'em. Young blood, that's what they says, young blood is what we wants. Why, I shipped aboard the 'Boyne,' Captain Hughes, before I was your age; ay, and got my first wound before I was in my teens."

And Briggs, junior, pondered over this,

although he said nothing.

So they went on talking, and laughing, and singing, and story-telling, until suppertime, and Briggs, junior, would fain have bade them good-night, but they would not hear of it, and so he sat down with them and made as good a supper as if he had had no dinner at all.

After which it suddenly occurred to him that he was only a schoolboy at Tusculum House, and that his bed time was nine

o'clock.

So he rose, and, pointing to the clock in the corner, which proclaimed the hour to be ten, hinted at immediate departure, adding that, as he had received already one thrashing that day, he ran a very fair chance of earning a second. He got away from the lodge with a good deal of difficulty, and, saturated with Bill Morris's sea stories, felt brave enough until he came in sight of the great black, lightless mass of Tusculum House. Then his heart sank, and he could not help wondering if Duncan, or Jervis, or Nelson, or any other of his pet heroes ever felt as he did now, before they went into action.

Of course he did not make for the front door, but crept round to the kitchen

entrance.

Pretty Susan answered his feeble tap at the door.

"Oh, Master Briggs, junior, sir," she said, "master is in a way about you. He came home an hour ago, and he says, says he, 'is Master Briggs in bed?' and I says, 'yes, sir, I believe so;' but lor', he goes up to the bedroom and he comes down again using language frightful to hear, and he——"

"Has Master Briggs returned home yet?" was at this moment roared down

the kitchen stairs.

In answer to which, our young gentleman presented himself. We draw a veil over the last act of this Christmas Day. Suffice it to say, that the same descriptive monosyllables with which we opened this chapter might fitly close it.

At ten o'clock the next morning a liveried servant from the Hall presented Squire Adams' compliments, and he would

like to see Master Briggs, junior.

But search as they might, no Briggs, junior, was to be found.

CHAPTER IL.

On the morning of December the first, 1803, the "Old Noll," privateer, ten guns, seventy men, Commander Briggs, sailed into Dartmouth harbour, bringing in tow three French vessels. Considering that she had been reported sunk off Saint Kitts, with all hands, and the name of Briggs had been expunged from the list of the living, her arrival caused no little

excitement and rejoicing.

Most famous of privateers was the "Old Noll"; most famous and fortunate of captains was her commander. She had been out six weeks, and during that time had fought eleven pitched battles, had sunk the famous French privateers, the "Susanna," of Calais, and the "Grand Turk," of Saint Malo, and had taken twenty-three prizes, of which she had sunk, burnt, or taken ransom for all but the three she now brought with her. She anchored in midchannel amidst salvoes of artillery and loud cheering, and ten minutes later a small gig put off from her, out of which leaped

on to the quay a smartly-built, brownfaced young fellow, in whom it would have been hard to trace any resemblance to the poor little schoolboy we left at Tusculum House thirteen years ago.

He hurried through the crowd who wanted to shake hands and congratulate him-his password being "fifty prisoners below deck "-passed up the main street by the Buttery Walk, turned into the agent's office, and found that his prisoners would have to go on to Totnes lock-up, as there was not an empty cellar in Dartmouth.

He returned at the same pace, jumped into the gig, and in half-an-hour's time from the moment of dropping anchor, fifty as desperate and ugly-looking villains as ever slung yard or stoppered a topsailsheet were on their way to Totnes lock-up

under a heavy guard.

Little did Samuel Briggs think that all these movements of his were being watched by the keen, although fishy and bloodshot eye of his dear Cousin Malthus, who had of course heard the news of the resurrection of the "Old Noll" and her Captain, and had gone out to verify what to him, for most particular reasons of his own, were very unwelcome tidings.

"Curse him!" he muttered, as he bit his nails to the quick. "This will upset all my arrangements. I must lose no time

and secure my prize."

So he hailed a double-sculled boat, and promised the men a couple of crowns each if they would land him at Totnes Bridge

within the two hours.

Arrived at the famous old bridge, with a couple of minutes to spare, he threw the men their money; walked rapidly up the steep street; struck off to the right, down a passage by the churchyard wall, and pulled up at a mean-looking house, at the door of which he knocked with some impatience.

A very pretty girl with dark eyes and dark curly hair, but with a thin, sad face, and very plainly dressed, answered his

knock.

"Well, Doris," he said, "is your father

"I believe so, Mr. Briggs," replied the

Mr. Malthus pushed past her into a little back room, wherein, at the window, sat the poor, bent, shrivelled ghost of the once proud Squire Adams of Barncombe

"Ha, Mr. Briggs, glad to see you, glad to see you," said the old gentleman, with a

"Any news in Dartmouth, forced smile. sir ?

"None that I know of," replied Malthus Briggs. "I've come to hear your daughter's

ultimatum."

"Well—there she is—ask her, ask her, I can do nothing," said Mr. Adams. "Doris, Mr. Briggs has come to ask you, once and for all, if you will marry him, and save me from utter ruin and disgrace"

"I can't answer, father, indeed I can't-

just yet," said Doris.

"But why not, Doris?" said Briggs.

"Surely you can say yes or no."

"If I say no," said the girl, "you refuse to help my father against his creditors, he will be imprisoned, and imprisonment will kill him. If I say yes, I am acting a lie, for I am virtually acknowledging that I will love, honour, and obey you as a girl ought to acknowledge to the man who is to be her husband."

"My darling, remember that you owe your life to Mr. Briggs," said her father.

"I know it, I know it, father; and I have thanked him over and over again for it, although it has not brought me much happiness," replied Doris. "But—but—there! I do not love Mr. Briggs as he deserves to be loved by the girl he will make his wife,"

"Small wonder!" thought the old man in his heart as he looked at the common, overdressed, puffy-faced millionaire before him, and then at the graceful, refined girl. "Egad! Twenty years ago a fellow like that would never have had footing in

Barncombe Hall."

There was a silence. Briggs stood at the window biting his nails; Doris sat looking abstractedly at the small fire in the small grate; Squire Adams was gazing as abstractedly out of the window over the old Priory orchards. Suddenly the sounds of cheering and the tramp of many feet were heard.

Malthus Briggs ran to the door, followed by Doris. In reply to his enquiry as to the cause of the excitement, a man said:

"Whoi, they'se be French prisoners for The 'Old Noll''s come to the lock-up. life and Captain Briggs with him," and ran on to join the crowd.

"More privateer work," said the Squire, when they told him. "I hate the word privateer. Privateers ruined me, as they've ruined many another man, and, by George, they ought to be swept away by law.

"Well, Miss Doris-my answer," said

Briggs, presently.

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"Give me until this time to-morrow, Mr. Briggs," she said.

Malthus considered. Delay was what he most wanted to avoid, and yet—an idea seemed to flash across his mind—he granted the girl's request, and went out.

"Father," said Doris, when the door had closed behind her suitor, "I'm going to Dartmouth to-night. Don't be alarmed, I can take care of myself, and it's for our good."

"How can that be?" asked the old gentleman. "You can't raise ten thousand pounds to settle with my creditors."

"Wait; I have put off Mr. Briggs. Do

you know what has happened?"
"Only that a lot of poor devils have arrived here to die of cold and starvation in the lock-up."

"And that they are the prisoners of a Captain Briggs."

"Well, what of that? Briggs isn't an uncommon name."

"No, I know it is not. Don't say any more. I will be back early."

A couple of hours later—that is to say about five o'clock—Doris went out into the cold, dark, frosty night. Her road to the river-side, where she would take water to Dartmouth, led her past the line of ancient buildings once forming part of Totnes Priory, but now used as grammar school, town hall, and public lock-up.

A single sentry was pacing up and down with fire-lock on shoulder, and uttered a pitiless joke to her as the cries and imprecations of the poor fellows inside, without light, without warmth, and without ventilation, burst forth.

She hurried on, keeping well under the wall to avoid observation. Suddenly, on the opposite side, she saw the figure of a cloaked man stealing swiftly and stealthily in the direction whence she was coming.

She shrank into the angle of a projecting buttress, and he passed on. Presently she heard a stifled cry, the rattle of some metallic object on the cobble stones, and the fall of a heavy body.

Peering forth, she could just make out by the dim light of a suspended oil-lamp, the figure of the sentry lying on the stones and the cloaked man bending over him. Then, terror-stricken, she fled.

By seven o'clock she was landed on Dartmouth quay; but so strange and weird a scene was here presented to her that she hesitated to proceed. The whole of the broad area was covered with men and women who were dancing and singing

by the light of half-a-dozen bonfires. The centre of attraction was a ship's boat, hauled up high and dry, into which a wild group of men, attired in the picturesque nautical dress of the day, were dipping bowls, and glasses, and mugs, which were passed about and emptied amidst cheers, and songs, and laughter.

Of course she saw what it was. The privateersmen were spending their hardwon prize-money in the orthodox fashion, for such scenes were the usual sequels of successful cruises; and a sea-dog, with an advance note for, perhaps, five hundred pounds in his pocket, could hardly be expected to be happy and content so long as it remained unspent.

Whether her curiosity had pushed her too far, or whether she had been carried along by the crowd, Doris found to her terror that she was almost up to the front rank of the carousers, and, before she could retrace her steps, a big fellow, with a red-cotton cap on his head, a long pigtail, and petticoat-like breeches, had seized her by the arm, and singing out:

"Here's a Dartmouth lass! Drink luck to the 'Old Noll,' and confusion to Johnny Crapaud!" would have forced a mug of rum to her lips, but that a stronger and steadier arm pushed him aside, and the voice of its owner said:

"Avast there, Jem Coombe! Avast, my hearty!"

At which the giant gave a clumsy salute, put the mug to his own lips, and kept it there until it was empty.

"You mustn't mind 'em, miss," said her liberator, "they've been knocking about at sea for six weeks, and they think they deserve a bit of fun. Where are you going? Where shall I convoy you?"

Doris looked up with some surprise, but there was something in the tone and the manner of the speaker which reassured her, and she replied:

"I want to see Captain Briggs, of the privateer."

Her protector laughed, and gave a whistle expressive of surprise; then he said:

"May I ask what you want to see him for ?"

"Well, partly on private business——"
"Private business! That's queer."

"Yes, and partly to tell him that as I came through Totnes just now I saw the sentry over the French prisoners knocked down."

"Hey! Hey! What's that? Excuse

me; that means a rescue. Tell me where I may call on you to-morrow morning and thank you for this information."

Doris hesitated for a moment, then she

"That isn't necessary; but if you would tell me where I am likely to find Captain Briggs, of the 'Old Noll' privateer, I shall be sufficiently rewarded."

"I am Captain Briggs," said her com-

panion, doffing his hat.
"You are! Well—Oh, I'm so flurried! At what time could you meet me at Totnes to-morrow ? "

"At any time you like. Say at mid-day.

Where ?

"Opposite the Seven Stars Inn."

"Thank you. I will be there without fail. May I ask if you return to Totnes to-night ?"

"Yes, if I can get a boat."

"I will get you one. May I offer you

my arm ?"

And Doris found herself being guided through the crowd towards the water on the arm of the most famous privateer

Captain of the day.

"'Old Noll' gig ahoy!" sung out Captain Briggs; and in reply the same smart craft we saw earlier in the day came alongside. Doris, wrapped up in a boat-cloak, was comfortably seated in the stern-sheets, the Captain gave his directions, and in another moment the girl was being rowed over the dark waters of the river as fast as four pairs of lusty arms could drive the oars. The dark figure of the Captain, with his hat in his hand, was discernible until a bend in the river hid him from sight, and, unaccountably, Doris felt more light-hearted than she had felt for many and many a long day.

"Here's a nice piece of business, Doris," said the squire as the girl entered the cottage. "The keys of the lock-up have been stolen from Cutty Langdon's house, the lock-up opened, the Johnny Crapauds all let loose, and Bob Copplestone, the sentry, found lying on the ground with a broken head. There'll be pretty work at Dartmouth to-night, for the privateersmen will be all drunk, the Frenchies will get aboard their craft, and be off before any

one can stop 'em."

"I don't think they will, father," said Doris, kissing the old gentleman, "the Captain of the 'Old Noll' has been warned and will be ready for them, although, poor fellows, I am sure I would help them to escape if I could."

"Well, be that as it may," replied the squire, "what is your news, child?"

"We'll have that to-morrow, father," "It's late now; but you replied Doris. can go to bed happily, for I think it is

good news,"

Punctually to the hour of mid-day, Doris hurried down to the Seven Stars Inn. There, leaning against the support of the projecting bow-window and surrounded by an admiring group of natives, stood the famous Captain of the "Old Noll" privateer, in his laced uniform, knee-breeches, and a sword at his side. Doris coloured up as she advanced to meet him, and instantly felt that she had seen his face before. He saluted her with stately courtesy, and she led the way to her father's cottage.

"Captain Briggs," she said, presently, "I'm going to take a great liberty."

"Take it, by all means, madam," said the Captain.

"I'm going to call you-Master Briggs,

junior."

Had Totnes Tower fallen over the street at that moment, it could hardly have produced a more startling effect upon the Captain than did this brief announcement.

"Why-good Heavens!" he exclaimed, stopping short, "I haven't heard that name

for years."

"Not since you were at Tusculum House School; not since you pulled a little girl out of the Black Pond !" laughed

"And you are she! Doris Adams, daughter of Squire Adams, of Barncombe "Well, well! If Hall!" he exclaimed. I've thought of you once during my voyages, I have a thousand times. so glad-so glad."

"I can never forget that day," said Doris, "and we all wanted to see you and thank

you, and reward you; but you had gone."
"I ran away to sea," said Captain
Briggs. "But, Miss Doris, it's still stranger that, as I saved your life, so you should have saved mine."

"I save your life!" exclaimed Doris. "Why, how could that be ?" The Captain opened his waistcoat and showed, suspended to a bit of ribbon, a battered copper coin.

"That was the penny you gave me as my reward," he said, laughing. worn it round my neck ever since. Well, a French bullet once flattened itself against that penny, which would otherwise have gone to my heart—so you saved my life."

They found Squire Adams walking up

and down the little garden in a palpable state of perturbation and excitement, but the clouds all vanished from his face when Doris appeared, followed by Captain Briggs, radiant and handsome; and the meeting between the poor, broken-down old Squire and the young sailor was of the most cordial and enthusiastic nature.

"That lying rascal will be here in a few

minutes," said the Squire.

"What lying rascal, sir?" asked the

Captain.

"Why, a man bearing your name who has been passing himself off as the Briggs, junior, who saved my Doris's life; who is madly in love with my child, who is very rich, and who-you tell the rest, Doris, I cannot."

So Doris told the Captain how her father had been ruined by the capture of his trading vessels by French privateers; how he was crippled with debts; how Mr. Briggs had appeared on the scene, and, posing as the little boy who had jumped into the Black Pond thirteen years before, had offered to relieve the Squire of his difficulties in return for the hand of Doris, and how he was expected momentarily to receive his final answer. Captain Briggs looked grave.

"That must be my Cousin Malthus. I heard that he succeeded to my uncle's fortune. We never got on well together, but I never thought he would have done

this sort of thing.

But time went on, and Mr. Malthus Briggs did not reappear, and the idea struck all three that, having heard of the arrival in England of the genuine Briggs, junior, and fearing exposure, he had got out of the way.

"Did you have much fighting with the French rascals last night, sir?" asked the

"Short and sharp," replied Briggs; "one fellow made a dead set at me, a fellow in a cloak, and I had to knock him overboard; the other chaps-

At that moment a white-faced servantgirl rushed into the room, crying:

"Oh sir, oh Miss Doris, there's a body

been browt to the door !"

They hurried out, and there on a rude stretcher lay the dead body of Malthus

Briggs, surrounded by a silent crowd.
"The man I knocked overboard!" whispered the Captain in a voice of horror; "I did not recognise him, of course, as my Cousin Malthus. Depend upon it, he it was who planned the those who don't know the ins and outs of

escape, and the attempted recapture of the prizes."

Of course—we need hardly write it-Doris Adams fell in love with the dashing young Captain, and married him; the old Squire got clear of his debts, not with the Captain's hard-earned prize-money, but with the fortune of the unfortunate Malthus, which Briggs, junior, inherited as next-of-The Christmas of 1804 was kept at Barncombe Hall in good old style, and amongst the guests who assembled to drink the healths of the Squire and the newly-married couple were not a few who remembered the new master of Barncombe as Master Briggs, junior.

OUR LASS LETTY. BY L. WALKER.

I ANSWERS to the name of Tommy Trot, which, considering my calling, and how navvies hang after a joke, might be mis-took for a nickname. But it ain't, for my father was Trot before me, and, when I was married, that was the way I was wrote down in the parish book.

I'm not going to give you a story about myself—though I had my share in it—but for the right understanding of what I'm about to tell, it'll be best to let you know I'm a navvy carpenter, and that I've rose to be a foreman in the employ of Messrs. Lyne, Rayles, and Co., contractors. For that firm I've worked man and boy for fiveand-forty year, and, if that ain't stifficate enough for any chap's respectability, I should like to know what is.

I mention this because of some things I shall come to by-an'-by, and because some folks has thrown blame on me and my missus for what was more bad luck

than bad management.

Some years ago our firm contracted to make a branch line for the Great Western down south, and I was sent from London to be boss carpenter and storekeeper at a place called Carchester, which was headquarters; so me and my missus and our lass Letty come down to live in the yard.

I suppose every one knows what a contractor's yard is like; how the engine-sheds and the workshops, and the forge and stores is kep' there; and how a foreman lives on the spot to be accountable for things, most gen'rally in a hut built o' purpose; and for a navvy's hut, I'd just remark that it ain't by no means a makeshift place, but as comfortable a one-storey house as any one could want. And our hut was so roomy, and the look-out through the trees across the moors and down to the river was that pleasant, that Queen Victory might a' envied us.

Me and my missus was very proud of our lass Letty-in truth she was a lass any one might 'a been proud of. It's hard to tell azackly what she was like, though I'd safely bet a week's pay that you wouldn't meet with her equal for good looks and pretty ways, not on a long day's trampthe rest you must fill in accordin' to fancy.

We'd plenty of place in our but for a lodger or two, and as we'd the room we thought we might as well have the company; in fact we were scarce settled when the foreman at the forge spoke to us for one of his strikers, who, he said, was a stiddy chap and had been on a job wi' me afore.

That was how we came to have Jim Talbot for a lodger. There was another and sometimes two others, but they count for nothing; while Talbot-but there, I mustn't put on too much steam at the

What struck us, first and foremost about Talbot, was his quietness. He'd nothin' to say for himself; nor did he seem to care about hearing other folks talk, which runs

sadly agen my grain.
"Talbot," I says to him about the second night at supper, "warn't you on the Chester job?

"I was, Mr. Trot," he says back.

"I scarcely recognised you," I went on. "It's only three years ago; but you've changed fit to puzzle your own mother."

To this he made no answer; but I'm a bit 'quisitive when I begin, and I wouldn't

be choked off. I began again:

"You never seed him, missus, for you wasn't at Chester; but would you believe that then-a-days he was as chatty and joky as e'er a one? Now, three year a'nt changed me. I feels innardly, and I looks out ardly, much the same as I did at Chester; so I nat'rally wonders why Talbot looks ten year older."

"P'r'aps he've been laid up," says the missus. "That ages a man quick enough."

But still he sat as mum as you please, eating his frizzled pork.

"You wouldn't think neither," I says next, "that he was a favourite with the gells, and that he dressed up every evenin' to go a-courtin'." At this he glanced up, | missus comes to me and begins:

and I saw I'd fetched him. That pleased me. "I heard afterwards as you'd married her; but p'r'aps that were just what she wouldn't do."

But the missus wasn't quite so much for chaff as I was, and when she saw

Talbot lookin' riled, she says:

"Let him alone, master, can't you? S'pose he has left his heart behind him, there's no need to be plaguing of him.

He'd just finished his supper then, and, as he put down his knife and fork and pushed back his cheer, he looks me full i' the face.

"Yve made shift," he says, "to mind my own business this good while, and I ain't beginnin' to want help in the matter jest yet. I shan't ask no questions of any one in this hut, and them as werrits me must run their chance of a civil answer."

Then he got up and walked out of the

"Well done!" says I, "I see we've got to be taught who's boss here.

Then, to my surprise, my lass spoke up

quite sharp.

"And why shouldn't he take his own part? If any one was to bait me like that I should let them know what for, too."

It were nothing unusual for our Letty to call me to order—that was why the missus said I'd spoilt her-so all I said was :

"Nay, Letty; if you're going to take yon surly chap under your wing, you'll have your work cut out, for it strikes me he won't take kindly to cosseting."

Now my lass was just twenty, and more than one smart-looking fellow, earning his five-and-twenty or thirty shillings a week, had come looking arter her; but she'd always been as highty-tighty as a Duchess, and they'd none on 'em got far into her good graces.

The missus and me talked it over sometimes, for, though we didn't want to part with her, we did want to see her settled com-Yet we weren't sorry to see that she meant to pick and choose, for we had saved a bit o' money, which was to come to her on her wedding-day.

Startin' a job is allus a busy time for the head men, so I were hard at it all day, and in the evening I were took up with thinkin' the work over, and puttin' down accounts, as well as with talkin' to Mr. Francis. If it hadn't been for that, I

might 'a noticed what was going on, and perhaps I mightn't.

Anyhow, one Sunday, after dinner, as I was taking a look round the yard, the

"Master, I don't know what you'll say to the matter, but it strikes me as Jim Talbot and our Letty are thinkin' o' keepin' company."

I was fillin' my pipe, and I were that took aback, that I snapped the bowl clean

off; then I laughed, and said:

"Come, missus, that won't do. The lass didn't turn up her nose at Joe Willet and Ginger Tom, to let a sulky-lookin' fellow, that's only a striker at eighteen shillin' a

week, get round her at last."

"She's turned up her nose at a good many, I grant," answered the missus, "but that she's let Talbot get round her ain't just the way to put it. As fur as I can see, it's her as has come round him. He begun by taking no notice of her, and whether that vexed her, or whether she's reely took to him out o' contrairness, I can't say; but this I can see, that they're beginning to keep company, for they've gone this very afternoon a-walkin' together down the moors. Now, what do you say to that?"

If I'd said all I felt, I should have said I wasn't best pleased; but I saw the missus was riled, and that made me want to take

Letty's part, so I said:

"Well, there's no need to flurry yourself. A Sunday walk ain't like callin' the banns. Moreover, Talbot's stiddy enough,

if he is sulky.'

"Just hark to him! Now, look you here, master, I've got my eyes open, and I knows what our Letty is when her mind's made up. I should be main sorry to part wi' a sober lodger like Talbot, and run my chance of gettin' a rowdy in his place; but I won't have him dangling after the lass, nor the lass dangling after him."

Now I hadn't been so busy of late that I didn't know what the missus was drivin' at with all the objeckshuns to Talbot, and why she was so wroth wi' Letty for gettin' a bit taken with him. It's no use beatin' about the bush, so I may as well say right out that it was all on account of Mr.

Francis.

I never rightly understood why Mr. Francis were sent to Carchester; our contrack was so small that we didn't want much of a staff, and Mr. Francis was certainly quite a soopernoomery. However, we was very glad he was on the job, for he was a real favourite with the men. His full name was Francis Lyne, Esq., and he was nephew to the senior partner; but he was as free as free with the men, and give himself none of the airs that Chapman, the

agent, did. I'd used to think it was a bit o' jealousy on this account that made Chapman keep his eye so sharp on Mr. Francis, and lose no opportunity of hauling him over the coals.

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Mr. Francis used to take it main easy, nevertheless—more than half the week he'd not come on to the works before eleven o'clock—but I weren't his timekeeper, and perhaps if he had more to do he'd 'a been

there earlier.

Anyhow there was no love lost between the agent and Mr. Francis, and the cashier held with the agent, and Mr. Francis, who was engineer, were left pretty much to find friends for hisself, which ain't easy to do in a place like Carchester, which is very high and mighty towards strangers which ain't of its own pertickler kidney.

I said I wouldn't beat about the bush consarnin' Mr. Francis, yet here I am, telling every reason why he were hard up for company, just as if I was ashamed of his coming to our hut so often, which I wasn't

-quite the contrairy.

He began with coming to talk business with me; but his manners was sich that he made us forget the difference betwixt him and we, and he soon got into the way of stopping to smoke a pipe, or take a hand at nap, with no ceremony whatever.

But while we smoked, I could see that his best attention was not given to my stories, and when our lass walked across the house, his eyes followed her with a look that told plainly what the attraction was.

And one morning when I came sudden to the house for a foot-rule, there he was in our bit of a yard smoking a cigarette, while Letty was feedin' the chickens. There'd been other things too, which a blind man on a gallopin' horse might have passed by, but which had been plain enough to me and my missus, and made us feel uncommon proud. You see, we thought so much of the lass that nothing and no one would have been too good for her in our eyes, not even Mr. Francis; for after all, a railway man is but a railway man, and it was but a matter of a few rungs on the same ladder.

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This was why the missus was so put out that Sunday afternoon, when the lass went philandering down the moors with Jim

Talbot.

I've never seen any good come of arguying with womenkind, so instead of saying anything further, I fetched out another pipe, and strolled off towards the cutting, as if the matter was ended.

Yet I was a little bit uneasy, for there was summat about Talbot I didn't azackly relish; so before I'd walked many yards, I thinks to myself: "Why shouldn't I take a walk down the moors too? and if I comes across the lass and Talbot, and plays gooseberry, it might be a cashalty such as will happen in the best riggilated courtships." So I turned and was crossing the yard when who should I see but Mr. Francis coming along as if he were on the look out for some one. "He's after the lass," thinks I, "as per usual," and I were all the more aggrywated that she should be wasting her time. But apparently, whoever Mr. Francis were looking out for, he didn't take it amiss that I ketched his eye.

"Hello, Trot," he calls out. "Glad you're on view—and where's Letty?" "She's out a-walking, Mr. Francis."

"Dear me, Trot," he went on, with a kind o' sigh. "P'raps it's as well for me that I don't find her every time I hope to;" then he sighed again and says: "Trot, I know what I'd do if I was my own master."

"Well, Mr. Frank," I answered, "surely if any one's their own master on this contrack, you are—or ought to be."

Then he began to roll up a cigarette slowly and carefully, as if it mattered very

greatly to get it taut and even.

"Trot," he says, presently, and, considerin' it were Mr. Francis, his manner were very hesitatin'. "Trot, there ain't a man on the job who's so little his own master as I am. I suppose you've heard that the guy'nor packed me off to this stupid hole because he was put out wi' me."

"No, Mr. Frank," I says, though I had heard some sich tales, and hadn't quite believed 'em. "No, I allus fancied you was a prime favourite wi' the firm, same as you are wi' the men."

"Ah, Trot," he goes on, "tain't every one has so much good sense as plain navvies. It'd be a long story if I told you where and how the split began. In fact, it's best forgotten. It was a trifling matter; no harm, you know."

"I'll bet it were no great harm," I said.
"Moreover, the firm can't contract for old heads on young shoulders. I only wish there was more like you."

"You're a good fellow, Tommy; if I didn't feel sure of that I shouldn't talk to you as I do; and you say you didn't know the governor had had a crow to pluck with me."

"No, Mr. Frank, I didn't."

"Yes, and I should be at the London office now, if it hadn't been so."

"Well, sir, it's an ill wind that blows no one any good; if you was on the London job, you wouldn't be here wi' we."

I wanted to bring him round to speak of the lass again, and what he'd do if he was his own master.

"I'm glad you appreciate me, Trot," he makes answer; "but I don't think I shall be with you much longer, leastways, unless things take a turn."

"Heaven bless us, Francis." (I called him so, sometimes, when we was privater and confidenshaller than usual.) "Whatever is amiss? Don't you let Chapman be too many for you. We should be main sorry to part wi' you, my lass Letty and all."

"Not so sorry as I should be to part wi' you—and her. Dear me, Tommy, why ain't things as they ought to be? But the fact is, I shall have to show a clean pair of heels to the whole concern if something can't be done. Look you here, my friend"—and he draws out of his pocket an envelope, which looked as though it meant business—"look at this confounded lawyer's letter; all about a paltry ten pounds or so, which I can no more pay than I can fly."

"Well, sir," I says, "why don't you draw your salary for next month? You must be drawin' monthly more'n that amount, I makes so free as to guess."

But he shook his head, and looked very

"That won't do, Trot; my salary is overdrawn a little, and that fool Chapman is so infernally particular."

is so infernally particular."
"Well, Mr. Francis, other young men
gets money—there's plenty of people ready

to 'commodate a gent like you."

"No doubt there are, Trot," he answers;
"but there'd be a lot of writing backwards and forwards,"—I thought he were wrong, but I didn't contradick him—"and I can't afford the waste of time. I've been hard up before, but never so bad as this. I've thought it all over, Trot, and I think the best way will be to go off altogether, so I've come to say 'good-bye' to you and Letty."

"Sakes alive, Francis! dont'ee talk like that. I've always held you to be such a plucky young gent. You ain't going to smash altogether because you run off the ra'ls a bit. I see how it is, you're low about the guv'nor, and so you gives way to despairin' thoughts. But you know I'm real fond of you, and it ain't hard to see that you have a hankerin' after my lass, so if you'll allow me to take the liberty of helping you, I'll gladly do it."

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"Thankee kindly, Trot," he says, still very gloomy. "I'm not proud, I'd not call help a liberty, but the only help equal to the emergency would be a clear twenty pound at the shortest possible notice."

"And that I'm game for, Mr. Francis," I cries-for I had some money for timber by me-"if you'll do me the honour of accepting the loan of it for two or three months, by which time, no doubt, your balance with the cashier will allow you to put all straight between us."

"Trot," he says, looking hard at me, "you don't mean you'll advance me the

cash, and keep it dark !"

"Upon my soul, I will, and truly glad to be able!'

"Heaven bless you, Tommy!" he says, with a tremble in his voice. "You little know how grateful I feel for what you are

So Mr. Francis had his twenty pound that Sunday arternoon, and a cup of tea with us, which Letty poured out, while he sat by her and whispered a lot of things into her ear, which made her say more'n

"Come, Mr. Francis, dont'ee talk such rubbish, sir; you don't mean it, you know."

To which he would answer:

' Indeed I do, Letty, and a good deal more, too."

After tea, he went away, and the missus talked of going to church, for which I weren't quite inclined.

"I'll stay and smoke another pipe," I said, "and the lass'll stay and bear me

company."

So she stayed, and the missus started early; she had a bit o' gossiping in view as well as the sarmin. Letty were un-usual quiet, and I, with my head full o' Mr. Francis, and what his row with the guv'nor could be about, sat in my arm-chair with my eyes shut, sometimes dozin' off Presently the house - door altogether. opened, and I knew by the step that Talbot had come in.

"Hush!" says Letty, softly, "he's tired;

he's dropped off to sleep."

"All right," he answers, in the same tone, "I don't want to make no noise."

Then he sat down, and the thought came into my head sudden, that if they thought I was asleep I should find out how far things had gone between them, which would be an easier way of finding out than by asking her-for when does a woman tell a man more than she means him to her face was white to the very lips.

know?-and agreeabler than puttin' the question to him point-blank. But for a quarter of an hour they sat as mum as mutes, till I thought they'd spotted my trick and were goin' to get a rise out of Then the lass says:

"You're very silent, Jim." Here I gave a bit of a snore to encourage his answer; but no answer came. "And so you was this arternoon out a-walking," Letty went on. "What for did you say we'd have a walk if you'd got nothin' to say ?"

"I had summat to say, Letty."

"Precious little," she said, and I could tell by her voice that she felt sore. "Did you call that saying anything !--you didn't speak six times. I declare I'd rather ha' gone out alone, and now it gives me the fidgets to see you setting there with your eyes fixed on me, as if I was sommat curious. I shall go along to meet mother, and if father wakes up, you can tell him where I'm gone, and why."

"Nay, Letty, dont'ee go. What I've got to say must be said, though I couldn't get it out this arternoon. I'm a straightforrard chap, Letty, though I am a bit You believe that, don't you, lass !"

His words shamed me a bit, for I wasn't acting the straightforrardest of parts just then; but he wanted to speak, and she wanted to hear him, and, if I'd waked up,

they'd 'a both bin disappointed.
"Yes," said Letty, "I b'lieve you're the right sort, though you don't get on wi' father and the rest."

"Now," Talbot went on, "there's no harm in a man keepin' his own business to himself, nor his own troubles-that's what I've allus tried to do, and I wouldn't tell no one but you what I'm now goin' to tell, and I tells it to you becos-well, p'r'aps you'll understand why."

"Jim," says the lass in a whisper, "you couldn't tell your secrets to no one as 'ud take better care of 'em than me."

"Well, then, Letty, I came to lodge here as a single man might, and there's nothing about me that looks at all married; but yet, Letty, I've bin, that is I am, married, and I've got a wife as I'm bound to."

"Jim!" she says with a kind o' gasp,

"Jim! it ain't true."

And I was so struck of a heap that I calls out :

"Talbot, what's that you're sayin' 2" He looked a bit flabbergasted at me joining in; but Letty, she took no notice of me. Her eyes were fixed on him, and 18

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"Letty," I said, very coaxing, "Letty, come to your old dad."

I don't know whether she even heard

"Jim," she said again, "it ain't true."

"It is, my dear," he said, so tender, that I shouldn't 'a thought it possible from him. "It's quite true.

"And if you've a wife," I cried out, "why have you been philanderin' about wi' my lass and doin' your level best to

make a fool of her ? "

He might 'a blazed out back at me, but he didn't; he only looked at Letty very sadly, and it was her as did the blazin'.

"He ain't done nothing wrong," she "If I'm a fool, it's by my own

fault, and none of his."

"God bless you, Letty," he said. wish I'd told you before; but I didn't see no just cause till a day or two back, and I don't bring it up for the sake of talking."

"Was it the gell at Chester?" I asked.
"Yes, Mr. Trot, it was. We wa We was married there, and after a bit I went to I let her London to get a better job. stay with her mother becos of the baby that was coming. When I'd got all ready I wrote for her to come; but her mother wrote back that she warn't well enough to travel, and that there'd be no little 'un. I waited and waited, and at last I went to see her."

I were sorry for him-his voice went so shaky-and Letty's tears ran down her

"And what did she say ?" I asked.

"She warn't there; the house was shut up, and the neighbours said they'd been gone a couple o' months; they told me lots more which it were no good my knowing then, and which were no help to finding her.

"Perhaps she's dead," said Letty,

"Nay, lass, I don't think so. I've a sure and certain feeling that I shall see her again. I've left off fretting for her, and I've left off loving her, but I ain't left off looking out for her. I don't know who ticed her away; but perhaps, some day, he'il cast her off, and then if she's hard up I hope she'll do naught worse than look for me-d'ye see, Letty ?"

"Yes, Jim, I see;" then she got up and went and stood by him. "I've been a silly fool," she said, "but you mustna' think very bad of me."

"Nay, Letty," he says, "who is there could think bad o' you?"

"Talbot," I said, "shake hands; my feelin's towards you have changed considerable."

With that we all settled to keep our own counsel, and to speak no more about the sad trouble; also I give the missus a tip that she needn't be in any fear about

Talbot sticking up to our lass.

As to Mr. Francis, after I'd lent him the money, he come to see us much more reg'lar, and two or three times he asked me quite serious what I should think of him for a son-in-law. But though I would have had him sharp enough, Letty was not of the same mind.

"I won't have anything to say to Mr. Francis," she said each time, "nor shall he say anything to me—no, not if he was

nevvy to ten contractors."

I must say I were mortal disappointed to hear her put it like that, feeling that if she would but say "yes" to him, he'd make the best of husbands for her; but Letty is a woman which knows her own mind as

akkyrate as my foot-rule.

I knew, moreover, that she was very unhappy just then; though she never made any complaint. It wasn't Mr. Francis either as worritted her; he counted for nothing in the trouble that was making her paler and quieter than she'd ever been We'd never spoke of Talbot's story again, yet I knew that was the trouble that was with her, for she was a staunch one to love, and she'd loved in the wrong place; and she was as proud as a Princess, and her pride had got a hard blow.

As the autumn wore on the weather turned very bad. It froze as hard as iron, and every now and then there'd come a downfall of snow in a driving north-easter. The moors, which had looked so green and gay, were bare and bleak, and the river ran black betwixt the frozen snow on either bank. Nat'rally we couldn't get on to the work, and those whose daily earnings went from hand to mouth began to look pinched and blue, and my missus, which had a warm heart, gave away all she could spare, and more—but I don't blame her.

It was, indeed, hard times, but when Christmas came we tried to forget how hard in a bit of merry-making, and I made so bold as to ask Mr. Francis if he'd come too, for he was going to spend his Christmas at Carchester.

"I'll come gladly, Trot," he said. should have a dull time if I didn't.

governor is still in the sulks with me, and I'm not going home to be humbugged by the womenkind into eating humble pie."

"Right you are, Mr. Francis, and don't you fret, the guv'nor 'll come round in time." For in truth it did seem uncomprehensive that any one could be hard on

such a nice young chap.

So it came that Mr. Francis and the missus, and our lass and me, and one or two more-which Talbot wasn't one-sat down to a fine goose and apple sarse in my hut at two o'clock on Christmas Day. should like to tell of all the jokes we cracked, and the songs we sung, and the healths we drank, and how we all larfed till we could larf no more; but I've other and more important things to say, so I passes all that over.

We'd sat a long time round the table, and the short day was closing in the earlier, because the snow was fallin' thickly outside, when our Letty says:

"Wasna that a knock at the house

door ? "

"No," says some one, "it were the wind.

"Nay," said Letty, "there it goes again," and she went straight and undone the door which opened into the houseplace, and let in a blast of nor' easter and a cloud o' driftin' flakes. "Who's there?" she said, peering out.

There was a faint voice in answer, to

which Letty said "What ?"

Then when the faint voice had spoke again, the lass says: "Yes, he's here, come

Now I've lived in East London, so I know what a wretched-looking woman is like; yet at the sight of the poor, gaunt, drenched creetur as followed Letty into the house, I felt all the pity of my natur' risin' hot and strong. What her clothes might 'a been, if they hadn't clung to her soaked through and through, I can't say, but her face was enough; the piteous, hungry, driven look in her eyes; the deathly colour of the skin which covered her cheek-bones, was somethin' too horrible to a man, sittin' in his warm house, with a good dinner inside him.

"Come to the fire, missus," I says, takin' her for one of the many starved out. But she took no notice. She looked round at us, lookin' hard because the light was failin', then she stretched out her hands and says:

"Francis, don't be angry with me."

With that we all turned to Mr. Francis. I fancied he had gone pale.

"Frank," she went on, "I've tramped all the way. I'm nigh mad wi' cold and hunger-don't be angry with me;" but still be said nothing.

"Mr. Francis," said Letty, "why don't you speak to her? Who is she?"

"Upon my word," he says, "I can't tell you; but I should think it's some poor creature who is out of her mind." His voice sounded odd-but why shouldn't it ? it was an uncommon queer predickyment. "I suppose," he went on, "that because I'm the contractor's nephew, they think I can work wonders.'

Then Letty struck a light, and I saw her eyeing Mr. Frank very suspicious, while the woman stood with a desperate

look on her wan face.

"Come and have a morsel to eat, missus," I said, "you'll feel better for it,"

Again she didn't heed me.

"Francis," she said, "in Heaven's name,

have pity on me."

"I assure you," he said, "that I am truly sorry for you; but I am not in a position to do much for you. However, here is something that will pay for your

supper and a bed.

So sayin' he reached out half-a-crown to her; which, at the moment, and considerin' the odd, wild way she'd come down on him, I thought very generous. But instead of taking the money, the woman lifted her hand and struck him a blow across the face, such as I couldn't have thought her Then, without one strength equal to. more word, she was out in the night again, and all our callin' couldn't fetch a word or a sign from her. So we shut the door, and looked from one to another very puzzled.

"Surely, Mr. Francis," I says, "you'ves

notion who it is ?"

' I've a very clear notion," he answered, "that she is a dangerous mad-woman. know she's made me feel uncommonly queer. I shall go round and speak to the police, and see if something can't be done to take care of her."

I offered to go with him, but he wouldn't hear of it; nor would he sit down round the fire again, so we had to let him go; and that was the last time he passed our threshold. After he'd gone we talked it over, and one said one thing and one another-all but Letty, who shook her head and kept her lips tight shut.

I don't know where Talbot had been

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spending his Christmas Day; but, anyhow, about nine o'clock he'd had enough of it, and were on his way home. He opened the door, and putting in his head without coming any further, he says: "Mr. Trot, just step out here wi' your lantern, will you ?" I'd rather have stopped inside, but dooty is dooty, and I thought something must be amiss from his manner. I took down the lantern and followed him The snow had left off into the yard. falling, but the wind was busy with it still, ketching it up by armfuls in the open places, and whirling it around and about till it was heaped against the sheds, and fences, and timber-stacks, in all the queer shapes you can think of.

"What is it, Talbot?" I asked.

"This way, Mr. Trot," he gives back, " There's leading me towards the gate. some one been makin' too merry this Christmas, and if we don't give 'em a lift indoors they'll never make merry in this world again.

Then I saw a woman lying face downward, partly covered by drift, at the roadside; it looked, as Talbot said, as if she was incapable. Between us we turned her over, and the light fell upon her face; the eyes were closed, but it was something chillier than sleep that had come over her.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, and truly

it was a sight to shock any man.
"Bless us all!" I cried, too, "if it isn't the woman what came after Mr. Francis this arternoon."

"Came after Mr. Francis ?" says Talbot, as if he couldn't believe what I said.

"Yes, mon," I answered sharp, "came beggin', and then throwed his charity in his face. She must ha' been mad, and now I fear she's past help; let's look sharp and carry her into the house." Which we did.

"Father," says Letty, in a scared voice, "what are you bringin' in ?" "Letty," I answered, "it's you poor wretch of a woman. Whoever she is, and whatever she wanted, we shall never find out now; for she's come to the end of her wants and troubles."

"Letty," says Talbot, "it's her I told you of. She's come back at last."

Now there are certain things in the end of this story that I'd rather not tell, for no words o' mine can say how sore I was grieved about Mr. Francis. Perhaps he'd have brazened it out, if it hadn't been for the letter Talbot found in his dead wife's | garden, and the only relief to the dark,

pocket, which bore witness against him at the inquest, so that every one knew how he had 'ticed her away from her home, and then deserted her.

After the inquest Mr. Francis was seen no more in Carchester (nor on any other job of Lyne, Rayles, and Co.), he went away, too, without bidding us good-bye;

which I weren't surprised at.

However, when I heard every one dealing out hard words about him, I wouldn't -for the sake of old friendship, which might be broken off, but couldn't be wiped out-I wouldn't be the one to speak of the debt betwixt him and me. Perhaps, in the weightier matters that cumbered him, it slipped his memory altogether; anyhow, that twenty pound is still owing to Letty's wedding portion.

But she doesn't know it; and she wouldn't care if she did. It'd take a good deal more than ten times twenty pound to make Letty unhappy, now that she and Jim Talbot are man and wife.

DOCTOR CORNELIUS.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Concelt," "The Ladye Nanoye," "Gretchen," etc.

CHAPTER I. A STRANGE MASTER,

On a wild, wide waste of moorland the house stood. Surely a drearier habitation man had never chosen, or one that spoke of loneliness and desolation in plainer language of silence.

As I got out of the old lumbering fly, I found myself confronted by a low stone wall and a weather-stained wooden gate. Behind me, in the red glow of sunset, stretched the moor, with the dull colouring of gorse and heather springing into life in the sun's rays; but here the light failed to illumine the black garden wall, and only the soughing of the autumn wind made sign or stir in the oppressive stillness.

I rang the bell, and heard its cracked and rusty peal sounding and echoing with a loudness that startled me. gate opened, and the man drove in and deposited me and my modest baggage at the porch of a low-built, two-storeyed house. It seemed to have been originally built on a little patch of reclaimed land. and then to have been walled in to preserve its privacy. A few ash trees had made feeble attempts to grow in the dreary enclosure; but weeds and gorse seemed to have monopolised what might have been a 52

weather-beaten porch, was a climbing monthly rose that seemed to cling with desperate tenderness to the bare, bleak wall it beautified.

The door was opened by an old serving man—a grey, grizzled being, whose age might have been anything from sixty to a hundred. His appearance did not prepossess me. I felt my small stock of courage cozing rapidly away, so I put to him the somewhat unnecessary question:

"Is this where Dr. Cornelius lives?"
"Of course it be," he said in an uncouth

dialect. "Driver must have told 'ce that."

"I am the new housekeeper," I said, timidly; "he expects me, I believe."

"Oh," grumbled the man, "he expects summ'un of woman folk. You'd best come in, and I'll tell him you've come."

I paid the fly-man, and saw my box put down in the hall, which opened directly from the porch. It was small and dark, and panelled throughout with black oak, and had a wide open fireplace, where now smouldered a dull peat fire. The man bade me sit down, and then took himself off to find his master and announce me.

I shuddered as I looked around at the uninviting place, and began to repent somewhat of the impulse which had made me accept the post of housekeeper and companion to a young lady, in answer to an advertisement which had appeared in an Exeter newspaper, and had finally led to my engagement by Dr. Cornelius, of Combe Wyvil, Dartmoor.

It seemed a very long time before the old man returned. When at last he made his appearance, he looked even more unamiable than at his departure.

"You be to coom to maister in study," he said, shortly. "I'll show you where it be."

I rose quickly, and was ushered into a dark roun, lit by one window, through which a few rays of the lingering sunset still streamed. A room with a faint, mouldy smell about it, as if for long it had been shut away from pure air; a room lined and filled with books, mostly ancient and leather-bound. Look where I might I saw books-piles and piles of them. This was what first attracted my notice. Then my eye fell on the solitary occupant of the room. A man sitting at the table, who lifted his head and looked at me calmly and scrutinisingly; a man whose faceworn and furrowed as it was-impressed me less with its sense of power and intelli-

gence, than with the idea of its fierceness and want of self-restraint.

Our eyes met. His betrayed nothing. Mine had probably not learnt the secret of so much self-control. He turned slightly and glanced at an open letter lying by his side on the table.

"Mrs. Drew?" he said, interrogatively.
"Yes, sir," I answered, quietly, noting
that it was my own letter to which he had
referred.

"Pray be seated," he said. "I must explain what I require. After that, I hope you have sense enough to go on your own way without troubling me."

I took the seat in silence. His voice did not prepossess me. It was harsh, cold, metallic. His long, white fingers trifled restlessly with the pen they held.

"You told me," he went on, "that you did not mind a dull life. I hope you spoke the truth. I live here quite alone, except for old Zeal—the man you have seen. But, to-morrow, I am expecting a visitor— a young lady. I am her guardian. She is leaving school. She must live here. You will have to see to her, and -and be a companion, as I said in my advertisement, I wanted a practical woman, and an educated and refined woman. Your letter pleased me; it seemed to say you possessed these qualifications. You may do what you please as far as regulating the household goes. I will take one meal a day withwith my ward—that will be supper, which you will have served at eight o'clock every evening. Zeal sees to all other requirements of mine. He will show you your room. Next to it is the one for the young Get what you want to eat and lady. drink, and keep your own hours. That is all I have to say.

I rose to my feet. He was folding up the letter, and replacing it in its envelope. "I understand you, sir," I said, quietly. "I hope I may be able to perform these duties satisfactorily. At what hour tomorrow does the young lady arrive?"

"About nightfall," he said. "She is coming from France. She will break the journey at Falmouth. You will receive her and see to her requirements. There is no need to disturb me. I will see her at eight o'clock."

I thought he was a very cold and unfeeling guardian, but I made no comment—only bade him good night, and left the room.

I closed the door and stepped into the cold, dim passage, which led back to the

hall. Glancing round, I saw, fixed to the wall above the study door, an oak bracket, on which was a human skull. A shudder of horror ran through my veins at sight of the uncanny object. I hurried on, and was relieved to find that the grim servitor had made up the fire. On a small table before it were two candles in tall, oldfashioned silver candlesticks, and some preparations for a meal. In a few moments the uncouth factorum made his appearance.

"I've made 'ee some tea," he said, " and toasted some cakes. There be a haunch of cold mutton in the larder-if you be

hungered."

"Thank you," I said. "But I should like to see my room first.
me the way ?" Will you show

He gave a grunt; then shouldered my box and led the way up the shallow staircase. Reaching a landing-place on which several doors opened, he pointed to one and said briefly: "There it be. I'll fetch

a candle; but, mayhap, fire 'll light thee."
"Oh, yes," I said, opening the door and feeling gratified at the blaze of burning logs which greeted my sight. I walked in and threw off my bonnet and cloak. The bed was a large, gloomy four-poster, and the furniture of the room most primitive and old-fashioned; but I had not lived my forty years without a fair percentage of hardships and trials, and I was at present too tired and spent to be over-critical.

A liberal application of cold water soon refreshed me, and piling on the fire some more logs, of which there was a plentiful supply in a large basket, I took my way downstairs to the hall or parlour, which seemed to be the general sitting-room of the

house.

I made an excellent meal after my long journey, and at its conclusion the old man showed me the rest of the house—which was very, very old-and had a curious history of its own, which I learnt long afterwards.

There was a coat of arms carved over the fireplace in the hall; and there were a few old portraits, cracked and blackened, and almost unrecognizable. Another room, the dining-room, was large and low, and contained a deep bay window looking out on the moor. The ceiling was of oak beams, black with age and massive. It was sparely furnished, containing only a long, low table, and a few leather-covered chairs; but a massive oaken sideboard or buffet stood at one end, and, according to old Zeal, had been there long before his master took the house.

Altogether it was a dreary place. I asked the old man how long his master had lived there, and he said, "nigh on twenty year." He also informed me that he and his old woman had lived with the doctor about balf that time, but that the said "old woman" had departed this life a matter of six months or thereabouts,

I saw no more of the doctor that night, and finally took myself off to bed, where, after tossing and tumbling about for hours in distracted wakefulness, I at last fell asleep.

I woke next morning with that sense of strangeness and forlornness which is almost inseparable from new surroundings.

My room looked hideous and dreary in the bright sunlight, and I was glad to get up and dress, and then make a raid with broom and duster and set to work to make it at least clean and habitable. I found old Zeal in the kitchen getting the doctor's breakfast ready. He informed me that I could wait on myself now that I was here to stay, and I cheerfully agreed to the suggestion, for I knew that nothing but constant occupation could ever keep my nerves and mind in a rational or equable condition amidst such dismal surroundings.

The day went by rapidly enough, for I had the young lady's room to prepare and the house linen to sort and arrange—and a precious state that was in, as I need not tell any one who knows what it is to leave a house to man's care. Then I had my diary to write up-always a habit of mine from my school days—and by that time it was getting dark, and I put on my black gown and a white apron and went downstairs to the hall and tried to make it look as cheerful as possible, though, indeed, it

was but a hopeless task.

I had not set eyes on my master all day, and was therefore considerably startled, when suddenly the door opened and he walked in. I rose from my seat at once, but he waved his hand impatiently.

"Sit down, woman; sit down," he said in the harsh, rough tones which had jarred on me the previous evening. "Never notice my comings and goings for Heaven's

sake !"

He began to pace to and fro, glancing from time to time at the tall eight day clock which stood in a corner; and I resumed my seat, and worked steadily on at the sewing which I had brought down with me. It made me nervous and uncomfortable to see that tall, restless figure pacing to and fro in that monotonous tramp. Suddenly he paused near my side:

"How long," he said abruptly, "have

you been a widow !" "Two years, sir," I answered him, with one rapid glance at his face, which looked like an iron mask, so stern and set it was.

"Two years," he muttered. "Were you happy—was he a good man—did you

love him ?"

"Yes," I answered, a little unsteadily, "we loved each other dearly, and were very happy. Of course, we had troubles,

and sorrows, too; but still-

"Don't talk that cant of 'mutual sympathy,' and 'sharing them together,'" he cried, fiercely. "It is impossible, I tell you—impossible! Who should know better than I? Ay, who? Women—what know they of love, of truth, of steadfastness ! Folly, I grant you; and trickery that weaves a shroud for every honest man's faith; but love—pah! The devil that shaped them to be our tempters, took care that they should have fancies, not feelings; emotions, not passions, wedded to fair face and guileless lips."

I stared at him in blank amazement. Of all men on the face of this earth I could not have pictured one more unlikely to have given love a thought, or to have considered womanhood save in the abstract

light of science or speculation.

He did not seem even to note or remember my presence. Some hidden feeling, stormy and deep, was at work in his nature. A strange convulsion writhed his face and transformed his features. He looked positively appalling, and I watched him in mute horror as one might watch the movements of a murderer in the helpless nightmare of a dream.

Yet suddenly, by some strong effort of will, he recovered his self-control, and drew up his tall figure, and all the passion died out of his face. At the same moment the loud, harsh peal of the gate-bell announced the arrival of his expected ward.

I rose and laid aside my work as he came up to the fireplace, and leaned against the oaken mantelshelf with his head bent

down towards the flames.

White and still as an icy mask, it looked, save for the glitter of the eyes. I felt that had I been the young lady, I should certainly not have thanked the fate that consigned me to so unprepossessing a guardian, and hastened to open the door.

CHAPTER II. GUARDIAN AND WARD.

fell on a beautiful, colourless face, with eyes singularly dark and mournful in contrast to their youth.

She came into the hall as I stepped aside, and looked round with a hesitating air, and yet, it struck me, with a sense of

recognition of familiar things.

The doctor turned round, and for a second's space the two pair of eyes flashed mutual challenge at each other. It would be hard to say which face was the paler, for his was like a marble mask, and the girl's was, as I said before, startlingly colourless in contrast to her dark eyes, and the soft, brown hair which swept back from her brow in natural ripples and

I did not wish to appear intrusive, so I returned to the door and assisted the flyman to bring in the shawls, and wraps,

and luggage.

When I again entered, the girl was standing before the fire, holding out her small, ungloved hands to the warmth of the blaze. Her face betrayed no emotion; she glanced at me with serene indifference as I offered to show her her room. she turned towards her guardian:

"Will you excuse me, doctor !" she said; and her voice was very clear and sweet, but cold, and somewhat foreign in its accentuation of the words. better call you 'Doctor,' I suppose ? It is less formal. If you have no objection !"

"No," he said, looking at her curiously from under his heavy brows; "I have no

objection."

"I am very tired," she said. "It is a

long journey.'

She began to unloosen her heavy cloak in a mechanical way. Her eyes wandered over the room, the furniture, the surroundings. Then her cloak fell off, and she tossed it carelessly aside, and raised one small hand and pushed back her hair, while her face took a bewildered, remembering look.

"It seems-" she said; "and yet it can't be. But it seems as if I had seen

this room before—as if-

The harsh laugh of Dr. Cornelius broke abruptly across the thread of her thoughts. I saw her start and shiver at the sound.

"Fancies, my dear young lady, fancies," be said. "Unless a dream has for once

been prophetic."

"A dream!" she echoed; and her hand was passed to her eyes. She stood there motionless as a statue for a space of thirty I FOUND myself confronted by a slight, seconds, then her hand dropped. "I sup-young figure, heavily cloaked. The light pose it was a dream," she said, and took up her cloak, and made a sign to me to lead the way.

At the foot of the stairs I looked back. Dr. Cornelius was watching her; and if ever I saw hate and horror in a human face, it was there on his.

A sort of terror and foreboding came over me as I followed that slight girl's figure up the shallow, oaken sfairs—alone in the world with a guardian who hated her! What tragedy lurk d around that friendless young life? What had she ever done that this strange man should have the ruling of her fate?

I led the way into her room and lit the candles, and brought her warm water, and all the time she took no notice, but just stood there looking into the fire, seemingly deep in thoughts that had nothing to do with her present surroundings.

At last I spoke. Then she seemed to remember where she was, and turned her head and looked at me.

"This is a dreary place," she said.
"Who are you? and what makes you live here?"

"My name," I said, "is Martha Drew. I came here as housekeeper and attendant to a young lady—yourself, miss. I only arrived yesterday."

"Is that all ?" she said. "Then you know no more of the place or of my

guardian than I do ?"

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"No, miss," I answered. "Dr. Cornelius advertised in an Exeter paper, and I replied to it, and he engaged me. That is all I know of him."

"He does not seem the sort of man one would ever quite—know," she said, hesitatingly, "and I don't think he likes me."

"You have only just met," I said.
"How can you possibly tell?"

"Those are the things one feels," she said. "And I—I know directly when people like me, or are repelled." The beautiful young face softened, the firm lips grew tremulous. "Very few do like me," she went on presently. "They think me cold, and hard, and unsympathetic; but I am not. It is only—only—"

Again she broke off.

"I have been educated at a convent," she said. "Everything in my life has tended to repression. It is dreadful to feel perfectly friendless and alone; and oh—" with a shudder as she looked around her, "what am I to do here! It will be worse than the convent, I think. There were the girls and the sisters—human companionship—but now—"

"I will be your friend, my dear," I said, compassionately, "and it may not be so very dreary for you after all. There are other houses and places in the neighbourhood, and you may soon find acquaintances; besides," I added, cheerfully, "you are young and pretty. Depend on it, you will soon have some one finding that out and offering you a more congenial home than this."

She looked at me. A faint, very faint colour came into her white, clear skin.

"You mean that I might marry? Oh

"Why not?" I said, cheerfully. "More

unlikely things have happened."

"Not to me," she cried, passionately, and her head drooped and was hidden in her clasped hands. "My life is different—it always has been—it always will be. Misfortune, pain, coldness, neglect—that is all it has had. There is something, some secret, some mystery about me. I don't know its nature; but I know it exists."

"Surely," I said, "that is fancy. Why should there be a mystery about you?

Don't you know your history ? "

"I have been told," she said, "that my mother was an evil, cruel woman—but she is dead—and my father, he died soon after—mad—so my guardian told me. He was his friend, and he promised to take charge of me, and I think I was only three or four years old when I was sent to the Convent at Saint Malo. But there was always something about me—a black shadow which marked me out as different to the other girls—the girls with happy homes, and fathers and mothers who loved them. No one has ever loved me."

The pathetic, hopeless ring of the closing words brought the tears to my eyes. Involuntarily I approached, and my arms

were round the trembling figure.

"Oh, my dear," I cried, "I wish I could comfort you. I am not a lady born and bred as you are. I am only a woman who has had her share of life's sorrows and troubles—a childless, lonely woman. Don't be offended if I say that my heart went out to you in sympathy the moment I saw your face; and what honest hands and heart can do for you I promise to do. Say you believe me."

She lifted her head and looked at me, poor child, with her lovely dark eyes swimming in tears. Then suddenly she threw herself into my arms, sobbing as if

her heart would break.

So we became friends, strange and un-

likely as it seemed, and after a short time we both grew accustomed to the dreary house on the moor and to the monotonous ordering of our days as they passed along.

Of the doctor we saw scarcely anything. He was either in his study, or driving out in the queer, crazy vehicle that old Zeal called the "chaise" to see patients, we supposed.

It was a very dull existence for a young girl, and I used to wonder how long she

could possibly endure it. It seemed a sin that a being so beautiful, so young, so richly gifted, should be buried alive in this fashion; and yet, as time went on, it struck me that Dr. Cornelius was too unpopular among his neighbours for any hope of social intercourse to lighten the dreariness of his young ward's life. She stood apart from all the common joys and interests of youth, as if ostracised by Fate, or crime; and a certain morbid and unhealthy state of mind was the inevitable result.

As the dreary autumn days passed on, and the first touch of winter fell cold as the drifting snow-flakes on the lonely moor, my heart ached to see how pale and silent she grew, and how listless and dreary were the moods from which I vainly tried to rouse her.

Often, I saw her guardian's eyes watching her with cold and critical speculation. He seldom spoke, and she was always depressed and reserved in his presence; nevertheless, I could see that the girl had for him a certain inexplicable attraction.

One evening, while the strange unsocial meal was going on, and I, as usus), was in attendance on them, I was startled to see the girl grow suddenly deathly white, and fall back in her chair. I sprang to her side, but the doctor was before me, and put me roughly away.

"She is only faint," he said, and I watched him uneasily as he felt the pulse and looked with calm, silent eyes into the girl's ghastly face.

Presently her eyes opened; there was fear and mortal terror in them as they met his cold gaze. Her lips moved. seemed as if something against which she struggled vainly and terrifiedly was impelling her to speak.

"Why did you tie the handkerchief so tight?" she said. "And yet, she stirs she moves—she is crossing the moor, now; -she-- Good Heavens! she is coming here.

The ghastly terror of his face was some- my dear, we never see a newspaper, and

thing awful to see as he seized her by the shoulder and shook her roughly to and

"Are you mad, girl, or dreaming ?" he cried; but his voice was hoarse and shaking, and great drops of sweat were breaking out over his brow.

She closed her eyes once more, and I. unable to bear the horror of the scene, came forward again and loosed her dress at the throat, and dashed water on her He did not interfere this time, only stood aside and watched. Presently she recovered, and sat up with a start and a gasp for breath.

"Oh!" she cried in terror. "I felt so ill. I—I seemed dying with the shock, and horror, and agony. What was it?"

Involuntarily I glanced at the dark and lowering face; her eyes followed mine, and I felt her trembling as suddenly she turned and clung to me with the desperation of helplessness.

At the same moment there came a loud, long knocking at the outer gate, sounding strangely distinct in the silence of the wintry night.

I heard the shuffling steps of old Zeal as he left the kitchen and made his way across the stone passage.

It might have been a long or short time before he returned, and came into the hall and abruptly addressed his master.

"There be an accident, air," he said. "Carriage overturned o' the moor. snowing hard. May the travellers coom in and rest a bit, while they rights the horses ?"

The doctor muttered something neither hospitable nor complimentary, then stalked off to his study, and we heard him lock himself in.

I took the responsibility of deciding the question on myself.

"Of course," I said to Zeal. "Bring It is a terrible night to be out on those wild moors."

He went away, and I turned again to my young lady.

"Do you feel right again, my dear ?" I asked her. "Hadn't you better go to

"Oh no!" she cried, almost wildly. feel as if I could never sleep again-never, never! Oh, Martha"-she caught her breath, and her hand suddenly closed on mine-"do you know," she said, "what day of the month this is ? "

"Not exactly," I answered. "You see, neither you nor I get any letters. I know 'iis December—some time, but I can't tell

you the precise date."

"It is the twenty-fourth," she said; and her face grew strangely wistful. She rose from the table and moved across to the fire. "The twenty-fourth," she repeated, mechanically. "Christmas Eve. What a Christmas Eve, Martha!"

I said nothing. I went over to the door and looked out at the dark night,

and the drifting snow.

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Dark figures were approaching over the snow-covered path. I saw one carrying a lantern; its feeble light cut a faint, zig-zag line amidst the gloom. Then I drew aside and waited, as old Zeal, and another man in postilion's dress, supported, across our inhospitable threshold, the feeble, faltering steps of a woman.

CHAPTER III. A CONFESSION.

A WOMAN ? Yes, only a woman. Naturally, it ought to have been a man, and a young man, and a handsome man, made doubly interesting by reason of the accident which had left him at our doors.

Then there would have been the elements of a romance, and he and my dear Miss Pearl would in all probability have fallen in love with each other, with the usual results; but this is only a matter-of-fact story and not a romance, and so I can only truthfully relate what happened on that dismal Christmas Eve; the first, and, thank Heaven! the last, I spent in the service of Dr. Cornelius. They supported the traveller in, and assisted her to a seat by the fire. As Miss Pearl came forward and put aside the heavy veil from her face I saw that she was quite a middle-aged woman; her dark hair was streaked with grey; her face was lined and haggard, and now ghastly pale from the fright and shock of the accident.

She sat down. "I am not hurt," she said, faintly. "Only bruised and shaken." She sank back, and her eyes closed. brought her some hot brandy and water as quickly as I could, and then the colour came to her face and lips, and she seemed to revive. Miss Pearl knelt by her side and chafed her cold hands. They were small and white as those of my young lady herself. Presently she sat erect, and the heavy cloak fell off her shoulders, and she looked around hor at the hall and its

occupants.

I was watching her face when I saw the most ghastly terror and dread leap as it were into one expression of recognition. | it not true she died ?"

She started to her feet, and her hands clasped themselves in shuddering horror. "Great Heaven!" she cried, in a low, "Who has brought me suffocated voice. here? Who are you?"

I was too startled to move or reply. Miss Pearl rose to her feet and gazed

wonderingly at the terrified face.

"It was an accident, dear madam," she said, gently. "Don't you remember ?"

"Remember!" that was all she said in a faint, suppressed whisper; but, oh, the fearful peal of wild and mocking laughter that left her pale lips. Never had I heard such sounds. Never—I pray Heaven—may I never hear such sounds again !

She covered her face suddenly with her hands as if to shut out some hateful sight. "After all these years," she moaned. -" then she "After-all-these yearsturned almost fiercely to the trembling girl by her side.

"Who are you!" she asked again. "What home have they given you?"

The girl shrank back. As for me, I began to think the woman was mad, and to wish heartily for the return of old Zeal or the postilion.

But suddenly she seemed to collect her-

self and grow calm.

"I have startled you," she said. "Indeed, was startled myself. I knew this place long, long ago, when your mother lived You are so like her, child, and your face brings her back to me so clearly. Where—where is your father?"

Her voice had dropped to a whisper. She looked round fearfully as if expecting

some new shock or surprise.

"My father," answered the girl, mournfully; "oh, he is ucas, guardian. ago. I live here with my guardian. "oh, he is dead, many, many years

"And your mother?" cried the woman, stormily, between her panting breaths; "what of her? What did they tell you of her?—quick, child—answer me for Heaven's sake !

"My mother," faltered the girl. know nothing of her, save that she died

when I was only a little child."

"When you were—only—a little child." Between the broken pause, the echoed words, she sobbed, yet scarcely seemed to know what caught her breath and made her bosom heave beneath the close, black gown she wore. "They told you right," she said, "she died—to you."

"What do you mean?" cried the girl, suddenly. "You knew her, you say. Is

"As you count death-no. But she sinned. She left you and her home. . . . It was not right, and man's laws are hard; but only your mother knew what shame, and agony, and misery drove her forth at last, resolved to seek the shelter and protection of the only love the world had ever held for her. But her life has been one long, long penance; and now she is a broken-hearted woman with no one to care for her in all the wide earth-

She stopped abruptly, for the face before her was alive with glow, and colour, and earnestness, and the girl's eager hands were clasping hers in desperate entreaty.

"Oh! If you know her," she cried, "take me to her-tell her that her child will not forsake her. . . . I, too, am alone, and wretched, and unhappy; I have known no love, not in all my life; but a motheroh, she cannot change—she must care for me, despite these cold blank years. do I care for—sin ? A mother has no sin in her child's eyes, if only she loves her."

Suddenly, without word or warning, the woman fell on her knees, her frame rent and racked by heavy sobs. "On, say that again," she cried; "say it again-and I will bless you for those words every hour

I live 1"

"You!" cried the girl, and looked down in sudden amaze at the kneeling figure Then as if by instinct some knowledge of the truth flashed clear as spoken words before her. She stooped and flung her warm young arms around the prostrate form, and drew her up to her own height again, and there, holding her locked and prisoned in that close embrace, looked with burning, eager eyes into the upraised face. "Mother-" she whispered half doubtingly, then with certainty and conviction in her trembling voice as she saw the face before her flush, and pale, and the whole figure tremble with passionate agitation:

"Mother, mother, mother, it is youyou yourself! No, don't speak. I know-I know. Oh the sweetness of that word! How often I have said it to the silence and the darkness; but now it is real, it is you. " She kissed her on the brow, the eyes, the sad, sweet mouth, so like her own; but the woman's heavy sobs were all the response to the passionate caresses

and the loving words.

"You must not love me, child," she moaned, in bitter self-reproach. "I am not worth it. My own act parted us. Think that I forsook you in your helplessness, your infancy; I-who bore you."

"You have come back," cried the girl in triumph. "I care for nothing else."

The woman drew herself away with "You must listen sudden, proud resolve. to me," she said. 'You shall hear my

story before you decide."

"I cannot decide to love you," cried the girl, with a low, happy little laugh, "for I do that already, and I don't wish to hear your story. It can make no difference-now."

"Every word you speak is like a knife that stabs me," cried the woman. "But you must listen. I must speak-and

then-

"Then," said the girl, gravely and gently, "I will put your arm in mine, and together we will face the world and live out our lives, for no human law can possibly have power to part a mother from her child."

"Such a mother as I—yes!" moaned the stricken creature. "I never loved your He was cruel, cold, suspicious, father. violent. My life was a daily and hourly torture, until, when I was most tired and most weak, Fate offered me a means of escape."

Her voice broke, a shamed, hot flash

crept up to her brow.

"I-I cannot tell you more," she said; "how mad I was -and how weak; but at last I took the desperate resolve to leave my home-and you. I thought my husband had no suspicion. I never knew how he had plotted, and planned, and watched. He dogged my steps; he found me before I had left home an hour, and—when I saw his face, I knew there was madness in his blood-the madness that makes of men murderers. Oh! don't look so sorrowful, my child. I deserved it. He left me for dead-strangled on yonder moor, this very night fifteen years ago."

The girl shuddered; her hands clasped

themselves together.

"Oh!" she cried, in a strange stifled whisper, "my dream, my dream. woman I saw with the handk handkerchief

knotted round her throat!"

"It—it was not tight enough," said the woman, shuddering, "and I recovered and got away in the darkness of the night. But the shock had sobered and saved me. I had stood face to face with death; it helped me to face once more the battle of life. I hid myself; I dared not let a living creature know my name. I have worked, and toiled, and suffered. Good Heaven, how I have suffered !"

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"But how came you here to-night?" cried the girl, wonderingly.

"It was an accident, or fate," said the sad, despairing woman. "I nover knew we had lost the road. I was on my way to Launceston."

"I bless fate," cried the girl, passionately, as her warm young arms went round the drooping figure; "and we will leave this place, you and I, mother. You shall not be lonely any more. Martha" -and she turned to me-" Martha, you must help us. We will go at once-tonight. I mean it, mother. I am not going to trust her out of my sight for one single moment; and you must help us, Martha."

"Yes, miss," I answered. "Do you really mean to leave here to-night?" I went on anxiously. "It is so cold, and snowing hard, and you are a long, long

way from the nearest town." "I don't care," cried the girl, deter-"I will not stop here another minedly. I feel I must go. You don't mind, mother, do you! And to-morrow, when I am at a safe distance, I will just write a note to tell Dr. Cornelius-

A low, horrified cry cut short her words. The ghastly fear of the face before her was something to shudder at.

"What name did you say?" she panted.
"Dr. Cornelius. That is my guardian's name," said Pearl, slowly and falteringly.

The woman sank back into the chair trembling, and white as death. guardian-

She hid her face in her hands, and her figure swayed like a breaking reed.

"He told you that?" she cried. child—child—and you never guessed you never questioned."

"What ?" half sobbed the girl, as she threw herself down and clasped the knees "Mother-you that trembled so visibly. terrify me. What is it ! Surely no new misfortune ? "

"He is your father. He was-my husband."

A low, faint cry came from the girl's pale lips. Then suddenly she started and sprang upright; her hand pressed to her heart; the colour coming and going in her white, terrified face. "Oh," she cried. "He is coming, mother. He must not see you; he must not know—he will kill you. I know it. I feel it."

"And I know it too," cried the woman, as she rose and stood there calm and erect now as a statue of despair. "Let us go at out into the black and bitter night.

once," she whiepered. "The carriage is there. Fate may be riend us. Come, my child, come."

"Yes, go for Heaven's sake," I cried. "Tell the man to drive to Moorhurst, Miss They will take you in. doctor won't know but what you're in the house, and to-morrow you can get on to Exeter. I will send your clothes.

I snatched up a shawl of my own that hung on a peg near the door and threw it over the girl, and with frenzied haste I almost pushed them out into the porch.

The outer gate was open. I saw the gleam of the carriage lamps on the white snow, and I heard the voices of old Zeal and the driver in the cold, clear air.

The snow had ceased. The two trembling figures, arm-in-arm, crept like frightened criminals through the shadows of the dreary garden. Then softly I closed the door and went within, and found myself face to face with Dr. Cornelius.

There was a look in his eyes I did not like, that I had never seen before. thing furtive, cruel, murderous, I thought in the sgitation and fear of that moment.

"Who has been here !" he cried, sharply, as he looked around. "Why are you so

pale, woman, and where is my ward?"
"Miss Pearl has gone to bed," I faltered.
"That be a lie," said a voice behind me. "Miss be in chaise yonder with the lady who was here. Didn't I see her face and hear her voice, too, as she stepped in? 'Don't be afeard, mother,' she says. That was just it. 'Don't be afeard, mother.'"

Like a madman the doctor sprang at the old man's throat, and shook him like a sapling in his grasp.

"Mother—she has no mother!" he "She is dead, I tell you-dead. shrieked. I killed her myself with thes very hands."

Then suddenly his grasp relaxed.
"The handkerchief," he whispered, and looked from side to side with a stealthy, frightened glare in his glittering eyes. "It was not knotted tight enough, she said. One knot more—only one knot more!"

Then, as he stood there erect and listening, I heard the sharp crack of the postilion's whip, the loud shout to the starting horses. As if that sound had galvanised the man before me into life and action, he started, and sprang to the door.

"They have tricked me," he cried. "She devils-fiends-they have tricked me!"

And it seemed to me, in my terror, that there was murder in his face, as he rushed

CHAPTER IV. THE TRAGEDY.

SHALL I ever forget, as long as I live, the horrors of that Christmas Eve?

I sat there by the fire alone, in that lonely house, for the old man had rushed out after his master. After a time the wind began to rise, and I heard the snow and sleet driven in fierce splashes against the window-panes.

The doors creaked, the fall of the woodash made me start and shiver, it sounded so loud in the stillness of the house. Midnight passed; still no one returned.

At last I rose. I could bear the silence and inaction no longer. I went to the porch and looked out on the dreary scene. The snow-flakes were whirling and twisting in the strong blasts; above, the clouds were rent and gashed as if by sudden stabs that showed a sheet of blue, or a glimmering star, and then closed fiercely again on the momentary brightness.

At last I heard steps—sounds. I rushed down to the gate. I saw a gaunt figure, white with snow, staggering along beneath the weight of some heavy burden. I did not shriek or cry; I seemed to hear my own voice speaking, without any consciousness of why I socked.

sciousness of why I spoke.

"What has happened? Who is that?"

The man pushed me roughly aside, and

stumbled up the pathway, and I followed.
There, in the lighted hall, I saw the figure in his arms—a woman's figure. The head was hanging over his arm; the loosened hair, half dusk, half grey, fell in rich disorder around the ghastly features.

The man laid her gently down before the fire, and then turned and looked at me.

It was old Zeal. He did not speak—only pointed downwards, and as I stooped to look, I saw on the white, bare throat the marks of strong and murderous fingers.

"She be dead," said the old man—"dead! No need to do naught for her. I knew he was mad. He's had his bad fits afore, but not raving, like he was to-night. She were a fule to come here."

"How did it happen?" I cried, as I

knelt down, and gently closed the staring eyes, and smoothed back the disordered hair from the marble face, that was so like, yet so unlike, Miss Pearl's.

" Maister, he flew after t'chaise; 'twere far on the moor, but he caught it oop, and leaped on the step. As I coom'd oop I heard young miss shriek; but he must have struck her, for there she lay, white and still, on the seat. Then he seized this one and dragged her out. 'Twas all over in a moment like. I coom'd up, and she—she lay there in the snow as you see her, and maister, he stood over and gaped, and mowed, and tossed his arms; and postilion, he started off as if the devil were arter him; and when maister see me, he started off running, too, and I-I just picked oop corpse. And there we be."

I said nothing. What could I say! The tragedies of life are soon over; it is only the consequences that are long-lived.

What could it matter to the poor soul lying there before what had once been her own hearth, that her murderer had been caught in the grey Christmas dawn, seeing that that murderer was only a raving maniac, and could never answer to human justice for the heart he had broken, or the life he had destroyed?

And Pearl? Well, thank Heaven that long before she had recovered from the long and dangerous illness through which I nursed her, the horrible records of that Christmas Eve had had their brief day of publicity, and were over and done with.

It all happened many years ago, and my dear young lady is now a happy wife and mother, with no deeper shadow on her life than the memory of the mother whom she only knew to lose.

Maybe that tragic fate, and that sad history had its lesson for her, for in the school of Fate are many classes, and it is not given to all to learn in the same way.

It may be. I am not a philosopher. Let those who are decide the question, or explain the apparent chance that brought Miss Pearl and myself together under the roof of Dr. Cornelius.

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New Series of "All the Year Round."

So many Volumes are now comprised in the current Series of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, that I have deemed it expedient, for the convenience of its readers, to commence with January, 1889, a New Series of the Journal.

It will be my earnest endeavour to ensure for the New Series the favour with which its predecessors have been received, and for which I take this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks; and I trust that I may be enabled to maintain, in the future, the high standard of literary merit for which ALL THE YEAR ROUND has been always distinguished in the past.

CHARLES DICKENS.

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THE STORY OF HER VICTORY.

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THE STORY OF HER VICTORY.

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CHAPTER I.

A YORKSHIRE FESTIVAL.

It was late September, and a broad full-moon shone over meadow and moorland, and threw a pallid glow upon the face of the grey-limestone cliffs that stretched along the coast, with their dark fissures and gloomy caves frilled by the wild North Sea. But the sea was placid enough this night, and the moon cast a path of gold across it as the tide murmured softly upon the narrow rim of shingle, and swept into the little creek—a mere gap in the great wall of cliff, where the roofs of the fisherfolk glimmered in the moonlight, and where a clump of masts and sails appeared over the rugged headland.

Above the fishing village the valley opened out into a broad sweep of pasture and park-land, at the head of which stood a stately old mansion, known as Hazlewood; and about the house, with its terraces, gardens, and noble avenues, gathered a dark ring of moors and wild hills. For any benighted on the hills around, the lights of Hazlewood formed a cheering landmark; lights that were a seamark, and that shone cheerfully into the eyes of fishermen as they cast their nets into the deep.

On this particular night the mansion was ablaze with light from basement to attic, and a dusky glow pervaded the terraces and gardens, and the dark bosky recesses of the park. For this was the eve recesses of the park. of the birthday and coming-of-age of Miss Hazlewood, known to all the country-folk as "bonnie Kate." According to everybody's idea of right and justice, Kate Hazlewood should have then come into full possession of Hazlewood and all its belongings; but things had been ordered differently. Her father, the late Sir John Hazlewood, had married, late in life, a young and handsome wife, and this stepmother of Kate's now held the property for her life, or during her widowhood, so that Kate's succession seemed a distant and doubtful matter.

Since Sir John's death, which had occurred a couple of years ago, little had been seen of the Hazlewood's in their own county. Lady Hazlewood's health required a warmer climate, and Kate had accompanied her stepmother to Italy and the Riviera. But this summer they had returned to Hazlewood, and then, to every one's surprise, it was announced that Kate was engaged to her cousin, Hector Hazlewood, who was generally known as Baron Hector, his father having acquired that title in the course of his dealings as a financier. People were surprised, because it was generally known that a strong

attachment had existed between Kate and young Ronald Carr. Ronald was only a lieutenant in the navy, and the son of the Rector of Blackness, a parish about twenty miles across, of which Hazlewood formed one of the townships. But he was, or rather had been, the favourite nephew of Admiral Vicary Carr, of Carrholme, who, owing to the discovery of a great bed of ironstone on his estate, had become one of the richest men in the district.

Sir John and Admiral Carr were great allies, and it was understood that the two elders had put their heads together, and agreed to provide handsomely for the young people. But after Sir John's death the aspect of affairs changed altogether. Vicary Carr had intimated to his nephew that he disapproved altogether of his attachment to Miss Hazlewood; and when Ronald declined to give her up, he declared that he would cut him off from his affections, and, what was more serious, out of his will. Something had occurred, too, to prejudice Miss Hazlewood against her lover. Ronald's professional duties kept him apart from her, and he had no opportunity of explaining any misunderstanding. Thus the news of her engagement to the Baron came upon him as a terrible shock.

For many generations the Hazlewoods and the Carrs had been the ruling families in their part of the county. The cadets of the House of Hazlewood had always gone into the army. Sir John had served with distinction in the Crimea and in India. The younger Carrs all went into the navy. Sir Henry Carr, Vicary's younger brother, was a distinguished naval ad-ministrator. When the news of Kate's engagement was known at Carrholme, Ronald was serving in the China station. Vicary insisted with his brother that the young man should be brought home, and appointed to an independent command. He was forthwith gazetted to the gunboat Widgeon, then engaged in looking after the fishing fleet in the North Sea. It was a sudden change from the spicy breezes of the Eastern seas to the rough blustering gales of the North. But delighted at the transfer. But Ronald was He knew every inlet and headland along the coast, and all were dear to him for old times' sake. And then there was the chance that sooner or later he might meet Kate Hazlewood face to face, before she had irrevocably linked her lot with another. All the more pleased was he when he picked out from the naval barracks at Sheerness

the seaman who had been captain's cox swain on board his former ship, the Rajah, and who had been invalided home from a wound received in an encounter with pirates, and when he had saved Ronald's life, as may be hereafter told.* Ronald got Brook his rating as petty officer on board the Widgeon. The two young men were of the same "pays;" they were both natives of that same cliffland, along whose coasts they were now cruising; and their lives and fortunes seemed curiously and fraternally intermingled.

It was on this very night when the lights were shining bright from Hazlewood, and sparkled upon the crests of the gentle undulations of the quiet sea, that the Widgeon was beating slowly up under steam against the tide, and came within range of the cheerful rays of the festal lamps. The boat had nothing particular to do this night. She was cruising about, taking under her care the boats of the fishing fleet that could be seen like so many dark shadows, gliding here and there, or shining ghostly white in the moonlight; their dark sides lit up every now and then by a phosphorescent gleam as nets were shot, or a draught of fish was taken on board.

To pounce upon any Frenchman, or Dutchman, who might be shooting his netswithin the prescribed distance from the shore, was one of the duties of the British gunboat. But there were no foreign craft upon the fishing ground, and the English boats were all busily employed in perfect amity. A steamer's lights were seen in the distance coming along at a great pace, her steam-whistle hooting dolefully over the sea. As she approached the gunboat hailed her, for evidently she was not one of the English coasting craft so common in these waters. She was a handsome craft, taut and trim, and the smart appearance of her seamen in crimson caps and braided jackets, seemed to show that she was some private yacht. She hoisted Russian colours just visible in the twilight, and seemed inclined to pass without acknowledging the hail from the gunboat, which was repeated more peremptorily. "The Cossack, private yacht-Baron Hazlewood. Who are you?" was replied, in excellent English. But the notification of the names of gunboat and commander, seemed to cause a slight sensation on board. A man in evening

^{*} See "The Lieutenant's Story," page 37.

dress sprang to the bridge of the yacht, and gazed intently at the gunboat, which was close alongside. Her commander returned the glance, and the eyes of the two men were riveted on each other for a moment; then they exchanged greetings with grim courtesy, and the yacht passed on at full speed while the gunboat steamed slowly on her course. And as soon as the boat came within soundings of the coast, the lieutenant ordered the anchor to be cleared; and presently the rattle of the chain cable was followed by the roar of escaping steam, and the boat swinging round to her moorings, rested placid and motionless on the tide.

Brightly shone the lights of Hazlewood over the sea. And when all was still the sound of joyous music crept softly over the waters. You might have fancied that you heard the beat of the dancers' feet as the strains of a gay waltz fell lightly on the ear. The sailors whistled a soft accompaniment, and a couple of youngsters, taking each other by the waist, pirouetted gaily about in the limited space at their disposal. Lieutenant Carr, leaning on the taffrail, gazed and listened in melancholy abstrac-Just two years ago he had danced with Kate Hazlewood at her birthday party; they had lingered together in the gardens. There had been words of love, a kiss, or, perhaps, a dozen, who can tell? Her head had rested on his shoulder; for one sweet minute her beautiful eyes had been raised to his with the light of love shining from their soft depths. It maddened him now to think of these things, and to know that she was lost to him.

As Ronald scanned the coast with wistful eyes, another light sprang into existence; a red and lurid light high above the cheerful brightness of Hazlewood; a ruddy tongue of flame that, here and there, caught the frothing crest of a wave and tinged it with a blood-red hue.

"Where away is that light yonder, Brook !" asked Ronald, as he turned to his subordinate, who had just made his appear-

ance on deck.

"It looks like a bonfire on the Topping, sir," replied Gunner Brook; "but I never knew of any one building a fire there. But I've heard my mother talk of fires being seen there; fires that were never built by mortal hands; but then, you know, she is always talking about such kind of

In fact, Philip's mother had the reputa-

altogether cannie. She dreamt dreams and saw visions; she read the stars, and was said to be versed in all the mystic lore of witchcraft.

"I have heard mother say," continued Brook in a nushed voice, "that a fire on the Topping meant misfortune to the Hazlewoods. They say that there was a witch burnt there ages ago, and that Hazlewood supplied the faggots, and that the poor old woman cursed the house and

all that should issue from it."

"That must be worn out by this time, I should think," replied the lieutenant

sceptically.

"May be so," rejoined the gunner, "but I've heard of the big fire that was seen there—ah, it's thirty-three years ago now -all the country was talking about it. And then came news that on the very day, a great battle had been fought in the Crimea."

"It was a fifth of November bonfire, I expect. Inkermann was fought on that

day."

"No, sir; it was the twentieth of September," replied the seaman, firmly; "and there was no talk of bonfires then; and it was the battle of the Alma that was fought, and Colonel Hazlewood, of the Guards, was killed at the head of his regiment, and Captain George Hazlewood, of the Royal Fusiliers, was killed too. The old squire never rallied from the shock, and that was how Sir John-he was in the Fusiliers too-came into the property.

"Well, that was good luck for him, any-

how," said the lieutenant, lightly.

"I don't know, sir," rejoined Philip Brook, gravely. "I don't think he was a happy man; and then look at his children, fine sons and handsome daughters, and all cut off-only one son reached the age of twenty-one years, and he died soon afterall cut off-all but Miss Kate. Perhaps you'll say, sir, that's lucky for her ?"

"No, by Heaven," said the lieutenant, hastily and bitterly, and he left the side of the ship and took a hasty stride or two along the deck. No, if Kate had not been the heiress of Hazlewood, there would have been no obstacles in the way of There would have been winning her. no miserable intrigue to rob him of her love, and Kate would have been in no danger from that scheming scoundrel who was to marry her. And then a great longing arose in his heart to see her once tion among the country-folk of being not more, to assure himself that she was acting

of her own free will, and not under the influence of some hideous compulsion. The certainty that she had ceased to care for him would be better than this miserable doubt that now possessed him. And she was so near! The strains of the distant music seemed to take her voice and bid him come to her. The red flame from the hill-top seemed to beckon him: "She is in danger, misfortune threatens her; if

you love her, come and help her."

Meantime the fête at Hazlewood went on merrily, with all kinds of enjoyments for young and old. The grounds were thrown open to all the neighbourhood. The great dining-room had been cleared for dancing, and a choral society from one of the neighbouring towns, was giving an open-air concert in the grounds. Then there were refreshment tents scattered here and there, where all comers were hospitably entertained, and in one corner a gipsy woman-or an excellent imitation of one-was telling fortunes with great success, to judge from the laughter and merriment among the crowd about her. But the girl in whose honour was all the merry-making, where was she?

While the merry minstrelsy resounded through the house, and the floors vibrated to the footsteps of the dancers, Kate Hazlewood, in an attitude of utter despair, sat in the little drawing-room reserved for the ladies of the house, an open letter displayed in her listless hands. Two other female figures were grouped behind her who regarded her features with anxious solicitude. One was Lady Hazlewood, Kate's stepmother, who was still youthful and handsome, and might have been taken for Kate's elder sister. The other was still younger, and resembled Miss Hazlewood strangely in general appearance, although of a darker and more Oriental

cast in features and complexion.

"My darling," Lady Hazlewood was saying in a tone of remonstrance, "as you are pledged to Hector, what possible difference can it make whether you marry him tomorrow or six months hence? And he has reason on his side. But wait till he comes

in person. He will bring you round to his wishes, I feel convinced."

"Yes, there it is," said Kate, her dark eyes flashing fire. "I hate him, and yet I have to do his bidding. Oh, who will help me to escape from him? It is too horrible. I cannot, I will not marry him—and so soon."

"But for my sake," urged Lady Hazle-

wood, "for my sake and for the family honour—oh, don't anger him by any foolish

opposition."

Certainly there was something about Baron Hector Hazlewood that made people in general hesitate to thwart him. He had forced his way to society and general recognition by an indomitable will and determination, aided but little by more amiable qualities. True that he was of the ancient house of Hazlewood, and, after Sir John's death, the only male representative of the family. But he belonged to the "good - for - nothing Hazlewoods," as his particular branch of the family tree had been designated by the world in general. His father, a cousin of Sir John's, had been in the diplomatic service at Constantinople at the time of the Crimean He was something more than suspected of betraying diplomatic secrets to the enemy, and he certainly departed suddenly from the scene of his mission, and took up his residence on the Russian side of the Black Sea. There he married a handsome Greek girl by whom he had two children, Hector and Irene. marriage brought him into relationship with sundry Greek merchants trading in the Black Sea, and he eventually became a contractor on a large scale for the supply of the Russian army, and was dignified with sundry Russian decorations and the title of Baron. But eventually he came to financial disaster, and died almost insolvent.

When the girl Irene was a mere child, Sir John Hazlewood took compassion on her, and made provision for her education. She grew up handsome and fascinating, and some years after the death of his first wife, who had belonged to a Russian family of distinction, the middle-aged Baronet fell under the spell of his charming cousin, and made her the mistress of Hazlewood Park. Her brother Hector, however, never obtained a footing there. For some reason or other, perhaps only because brother and sister always quarrelled when together, Sir John had declined to receive him. As Hector was not of a forgiving disposition, it is probable that this slight upon him rankled in his mind. Anyhow, it increased the zest of his triumph when, after Sir John's death, the necessities of his aister brought Hazlewood, its present tenant, and the heiress of the future completely under his control.

When the Baron, at his sister's appeal, consented to look into her affairs, he found

that while she had, during the two years following her husband's death, contrived to spend considerably more than the revenues of the property, those revenues had been considerably diminished by Sir John's latest disposition of his affairs. True that he had provided that his widow, so long as she continued in her widowhood, should enjoy all the income of the estate. But then by a codicil Sir John had directed his chosen trustees to raise the sum of twenty thousand pounds, which was to be handed to his daughter on the day she came of age, for her sole use and disposal. In the event of his daughter's death before attaining the age of twenty-one years, the money was to be paid to Count Sarda, Sir John's brother-in-law, residing at Aloupka in the Crimea, to be by him disposed of to religious and charitable uses at his discretion.

The Baron thought carefully over these arrangements. They were natural enough, perhaps, in one like the deceased Baronet. Sir John would not withdraw his confidence from his wife, but he would make a separate provision for his daughter; and he had adroitly contrived that none of the "ne'er-do-weel" Hazlewoods should have any interest in her death. Another score against Sir John in the Baron's record, was this proof of the estimation in which he had been held.

When the Baron made the acquaintance of his cousin Kate, his plans at once took a definite form. He fell in love with her at once, fascinated by her beauty and her charm of manner. Fascinating, too, was the prospect of the twenty thousand pounds that would be hers at a date no longer distant, and then there was the reversion of Hazlewood in prospect. The Baron told himself that he might make a more brilliant marriage, but none so gratifying to his amour propre. He who had never been allowed to set foot within Hazlewood, would eventually be its master. He would be content to sink his pinch-beck title to become Hazlewood of Hazlewood. The twenty thousand pounds, too, that his cousin Sir John had taken such precautions to keep from him, would be his; and what fortunes might he not build up from the command of such a sum !

But, in spite of his many accomplishments, and a handsome person, the Baron failed to make an impression upon Kate Hazlewood. He sought for the cause, and found it in the fact that the young woman's

heart was preoccupied with the image of Ronald Carr. And although she liked the Baron well enough, and appreciated his efforts to make the time pass pleasantly in the continental resorts, of which he possessed the full "carte du pays," yet she did not suspect any serious purpose in his assiduous attentions.

The Baron saw that nothing could be done unless he could impair the understanding that clearly existed between the two lovers. This young Carr was far enough away, and if there had been any correspondence between the lovers it would not have been difficult to intercept But they did not correspond; some agreement to this effect had been extorted from the young people by friends on both sides. Kate was waiting patiently for her sailor lover, confident of his constancy and enduring affection. Those qualities, which are, perhaps, becoming rare on land, still flourish among sailors. Still Kate had news of Ronald pretty regularly, from one source or another. So much was evident to the Baron's acute perceptions. mien became somewhat anxious and preoccupied when the news was long delayed, and then she would all of a sudden recover her buoyancy of mind and become all that was charming and pleasant. Kate's honest affection was a shield that saved her from all the evil influences that might be brought to bear upon her.

Chance, however, suggested to Baron Hector a suitable instrument for his purpose. Among his Greek connections was a young girl, Bianca, Italian on the mother's side, whose parents had fallen upon evil days. The Baron had been kind to them in his way, and had been especially kind to Bianca. Thanks to his interference, she had received a good musical education. She was a good linguist also, although in other respects her attainments were but rudimentary. The Baron obtained for her temporary employment with English families in Rome, and now he introduced her to the Hazlewoods, who took a great interest in the clever, handsome girl.

Before long, Bianca was installed as friend and companion in the Hazlewood household. Kate treated her as a sister, and admitted her into full confidence. Bianca was faithful only to her Baron, who was for her a very demigod. For him she would have gone through fire and water, and she would have obeyed his commands even if they involved a baseness foreign to her patture.

"Find out for me," said the Baron, brusquely, one day, "how Miss Hazlewood gets news of her lover." Before long, Bianca handed a packet secretly to her patron.

"Here are his letters," she said, simply,

and waited his further commands.

After all, the letters were a disappointment. They were not from Ronald, but from an artless young sailor, Philip Brook, who wrote to Kate as his foster-sister, and who evidently looked up to her with almost fraternal, nay, almost filial feelings. There were acknowledgements of gifts of money, of books, and other matters; of good advice, too; of scoldings sometimes, for Philip got into scrapes now and then, and always made full confession to his foster-sister.

"Devilish idyllic and nice!" said the Baron with a sneer, as he glanced through these school-boyish letters, for the young sailor was still but a boy in knowledge

of the world.

But in these letters there was a good deal said about a certain "2nd luff"—allusions that puzzled the Baron not a little, till in one place he found substituted the name of Mr. Carr. That accounted for it all. Ronald Carr was second lieutenant in the same ship, and Kate was kept fully informed of all that happened to her lover.

"And now," said the Baron to Bianca, when he returned the packet of letters, "get me a sight of the next letter that

comes, before Miss Hazlewood."

There was no great difficulty in this either, for Kate took no precautions about her letters; and, indeed, those she received from her "sailor laddie" all the world might have read. And early one morning Bianca brought him a letter to his hotel. The Hazlewoods had been out late the night before at some reception, and were not to be disturbed for letters or anything else. Hence this opportunity.

The Father of Evil must have been specially interested in the Baron's favour, for, as it happened, poor Philip's letter for

once contained a piece of scandal:

"There has been a jolly row here. Luff has bolted with a girl, daughter of a rich merchant. It will all be hushed up, no doubt; and don't mention it when you write, for fellows look over sometimes."

Now Luff, in Philip's vernacular, was always the first lieutenant, and, no doubt, the scandal was on his account. But it was easy enough to insert a figure 2 before the word in Philip's usual manner, and then—to watch the result.

The result was apparent enough. Kate was cut to the heart. The arrow had gone home with almost fatal effect. she would not condemn her lover unheard. at the same time she could not doubt but that Philip had written the truth. base fraud was likely to prove even too effectual, for Kate seemed to fade and wither from that moment, till all her friends were seriously alarmed, and people began to recall the fate of all the other children-her brothers and sisters. And Kate's death would benefit nobody except that unknown Count in the Crimea, to whom, rather than to his own blood relation, Sir John had willed the reversion of the estate as well as of Kate's twenty thousand pounds.

The doctors summoned shook their heads, and said that the climate of Italy was too relaxing for her, and it would be better to take her back to her native air.

The prescription proved efficacious; or, perhaps, it was that Kate's natural spirit and vivacity reasserted themselves together with a girl's natural pride. The rôle of a deserted maiden was not one for Miss Hazlewood to play. The Baron was at hand, his tenderness and assiduity during her illness had been grateful to her feeling. Lady Hazlewood was continually sounding her brother's praises. The marriage would be an excellent family arrangement. All debts would be paid, and Lady Hazlewood would resign her interest in the estate to the Baron and Kate, in consideration of an annuity which would be paid whether or no Lady Hazlewood married again. That was the crux of the whole arrangement for Lady Hazlewood, who had already formed an attachment to a handsome young French artist whom she had met in Rome. At last Kate gave way; she would marry the Baron, but not now; a year hence. A lapse of time reduced to six months at Lady Hazlewood's earnest solicitation. Then, after the engagement had only lasted a month, during which time the Baron had been engaged abroad arranging his affairs, came a pressing demand that the marriage should be solemnised at once.

The Baron's ruse had answered admirably so far, but certain precautions were necessary to ensure its final success. No more letters must she receive from her foster-brother—lest she should be undeceived. And here the chance that inflicted a serious wound on Philip Brook, came to the Baron's aid, and the danger

was removed from his path. Elspeth Brook, Kate's foster-mother, with whom Miss Hazlewood was on the most affectionate terms, and who might have cleared up the misapprehension under which she suffered—Elspeth Brook had left her cottage on the moor in charge of a little blind girl, her servant, and had gone away on some secret expedition. Such occasional absences, lasting for six months or more, were not unusual on Elspeth's part. The result in this case was, that Kate had no one about her except those who were altogether in the Baron's interest. Ronald Carr was on the other side of the world; Philip Brook was lying wounded in some distant hospital; while Ronald's people, the Carrs, had quarrelled so bitterly with Lady Hazlewood, that they visited no longer at Hazlewood.

But it was a considerable shock to the Baron when he discovered, from the rencontre of his yacht with the gunboat Widgeon, that his rival was, in person, so near at hand. He had thought him safe in the Pacific for another year at least. But he was all the more confirmed in his resolution to force Miss Hazlewood into an immediate marriage. The twenty thousand pounds were indispensable to him, and any delay might bring the lieutenant on the scene, and seriously complicate the

situation.

CHAPTER IL

THE SIBYL'S HOME.

THE lieutenant and Philip landed at the little harbour, whose entrance was marked by a feeble oil-lamp glimmering at the end of a rough jetty. The fisher-folk, such as were not at sea, had all gone to witness the festivities at Hazlewood. Not a soul saw the two young men disembark, or noticed them as they struck into the road that leads to the Hall. They reached the park, and passed from the shadow of overarching trees into the full light of the illuminated grounds about the mansion.

"Wait for me here," said Ronald to his companion. "I will go to the house and demand to see Miss Hazlewood."

Ronald's demand, however, was met with courteous refusal. Lady Hazlewood herself came out to receive him.

"So sorry that Kate is a little out of sorts, and unable to exert herself as she wished. And, you know, she has to save herself for to-morrow—the wedding—you

glance. "But she will appear for a few moments. When the Baron arrives-we expect him every moment - Kate will show herself with him at the drawing-room window for a short time to take a general leave of all her old friends."

"And where is she going?" gasped Ronald, quite overcome by the certainty

of his misfortune.

"In the Baron's yacht to the Mediterranean. She will have anchored off Whitby by this time. And now will you find your way into the ball-room, and choose a partner? You won't want an introduction, know, to any of our Yorkshire belles."

"Will you let Kate know I am here?" replied Ronald, disregarding altogether her suggestion. "I and Philip Brook."

"Oh, certainly," replied Lady Hazle-wood, sweetly. "I will tell her myself."

In a few moments Lady Hazlewood re-

"She is so sorry, poor girl! she would like to see you both. But where could she draw the line?"

Ronald turned on his heel, with something like an execration, and retired, baffled. He went to look for Philip, intending to go back to the ship. Philip, whose feelings were less engaged in the matter, had wandered away in search of amusement; and when Ronald discovered him, he was in a remote corner of the grounds, and having his fortune told by a tall gipsy in a tartan shawl and tall conical hat

"Look here, lieutenant," cried Philip in high glee, "here's the stunningest gipsy that ever I saw! She's told me everything that ever happened to me. And I'm to have a girl with-how many thousand pounds did you say, mother ? "

"Never mind the figure, my dear," said the gipsy, laughing; "but here's a handsome gentleman with a lucky face. He shall have twenty thousand pounds for a portion, and the sweetest girl that ever was born."

Ronald looked straight into the gipsy's face, and then burst into a laugh. "Brook,

you donkey, look at her again."
"Why, it's mother," said Philip, and gave the gipsy a hug that considerably disarranged her tall hat and false ringlets.

"Oh, hush!" said Mrs. Brook, for she it was, rearranging hastily her coiffure and placing one finger warningly to her lips. "Yes, my dears, it is Mother Elspeth, and I'm just on my way home from half round the world; but I'm bound to see Miss know," as Ronald gave her a puzzled Kate, and there's many that would like to stop me. But go your ways, you two marplots. They'll never bring out my Kate till you two are off the premises. Go to the cottage, Philip, and bide my coming, and if Mr. Carr will go too, he will be heartily welcome. And if he wants to see Miss Kate, he shall, if there were twenty Barons in the way.'

"Come along, Mr. Carr," cried Philip, "mother will be as good as her word, never fear. But I say, mother," in a whisper, "were it you that raised the fire

on the Topping 1"

"What! is there a blaze on the Topping," said Elspeth in a tone of awe. "Oh, my poor Kate; I fear-I fear for But, never mind, there's other Hazlewoods than thee in the house this night, and the ill-luck shall be for them, the Lord grant it, Amen." And Elspeth dropped upon her knees and raised her hands to the sky.

After a few moments' reflection, Ronald determined to follow Mrs. Brook's advice, and take refuge at the cottage for the night. And just as they reached the gates, a carriage and pair drove up, from which, meaning the carriage, appeared a grey, gaunt-looking head, which Ronald recognised as belonging to his uncle, Vicary Carr.

"Hi," said old Carr, recognising his nephew, "what are you doing ashore? You'll be dismissed your ship, sir. What am I doing here? What's my friend, Mr. Smith, doing here, you mean-Mr. Smith, of the North Cleveland Bank. He's got the money, not I-I tell everybody that. I don't want to be murdered in my bed. He don't mind, he's paid for it, ain't you, Smith 1"

Admiral Carr jumped from the carriage and was followed by Mr. Smith, who carried very carefully a small black bag. "The Admiral will have his joke," said he,

and smiled feebly.

"Well, I'm going to sleep in the enemy's camp to night, Rony," said the Admiral, apart to his nephew. "I'm bound to be there, for I'm trustee under the will. Smith has got the coin; all Miss's portion, The Baron—faugh !- his lordship! thinks he's going to have it all. Perhaps he's mistaken. Rony, my boy, you are well out of the mess."

The Admiral made his way to the house with long, rapid strides, followed by Mr. Smith with the black bag. Hardly had they disappeared, when the road was lit up by the lamps of a four-horse coach, making a sharp turn at the lodge gates, Baron rolled smoothly along the avenue. Hector was driving, and the coach was crammed inside and out by men in crimson caps and blue jackets-twenty or more of them. These were the crew of the yacht, no doubt; and what was more natural than for the Baron to bring them over to share in the festivities at Hazlewood? On the other hand, it might be said that Baron Hector was a cautious player, and did not choose to leave anything to chance.

Ronald and Philip breasted the hill together in the pure exhilarating air of the The footpath led upwards and still upwards for a couple of miles, and descended into a little ravine where a large whitewashed cottage stood by the margin of a little brook, with a few trees and shrubs growing about it, and some signs of cultivation showing here and This was Elspeth Brook's little there. domain, which she had inherited from her ancestors, subject to a quit-rent of half-acrown a year to Hazlewood. People said she was a lineal descendant of the old witch who was burnt on the Topping long ago, an assertion to which Elspeth said neither yea nor nay.

A cheerful light shone from the cottage window, and mingling with the babble of the stream, was the voice of one singing the lilt of some old border ballad.

"It is Lucy; she is always singing," said Philip, as he stood to listen for a "Eh, it's pleasant to be home moment. again, little woman," he said, as he burst into the cottage.

"Philip!" cried the girl in a glad voice. "Oh, I knew you were coming; and mother, too, she will not be far behind."

Besides the comfortable kitchen, with a cheerful fire blazing on the hearth, there was a capital room, which Sir John had fitted up for his own use when he was shooting on the moors, and adorned with various trophies from all parts of the world, as well as bookshelves well filled with volumes; and everything remained just as he had left it. But the air within was rather oppressive, and Ronald preferred the sweet, soft breeze outside.

"Come with me," said Philip, "and I

will show you mother's best room."

He led the way to a little hillock that occupied the rising ground above the There was a circle of ancient ravine. stones, two or three of which, piled together at random, formed a comfortable that came rattling along at full speed, and seat, from which could be seen an almost boundless extent of sea, and sky, and wild

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The tongue of fire on the Topping had sunk down to a scarcely distinguishable glow of red light, but Hazlewood and its lights were clearly to be seen, and the sea stretched away till it mingled with the There lay the purple sky in the distance. Widgeon, peacefully becalmed, her anchor

light shining like a star.

Ronald lighted a cigar, and, finding himself in the Druid's seat, scanned the scene about him-the multitude of stars shining serenely down from the purple sky, the moon now riding high in the heavens, the hill-tops, some wreathed in white mist, and others of a darker hue than even the purple sky, and the sea, with its scattered lights, that bounded the dim and indefinite horizon.

Before long, footsteps might have been heard, and the tall form of Elspeth seen slowly ascending the footpath. Philip gave a whistle, and his mother, instead of turning towards the cottage, followed the

path to the Druid's circle.

"Well, I have seen her," said Elspeth, when she had recovered her breath; "I have seen my bonnie Kate. But eh! you man's got a powerful hold of her. I doubt whether she can win through against him. But she's coming at sunrise to-morrow; she'll be here then to see her old mother. But you lads must get out of the way, for I've that to say to her and she to me that no other ears must listen to. And now get ye your suppers while I watch the stars; ay, and watch and pray that my lassie may win the victory."

CHAPTER III.

A SACRILEGIOUS DEED,

WHEN day dawned over sea and landthe dawn of the day that was to witness the marriage of Kate Hazlewood - that young woman awoke with a dazed consciousness of impending misfortune, that only deepened as she became thoroughly She remembered, too, her tryst with her foster-mother, and the thought inspired her with some faint hope of escape. She dressed hastily, and went out, making for a garden gate that led to a footpath to the moors. No one had now a right to question her movements, for she membered, with an accession of confidence, that she had now attained her legal majority, and had a right to act for herself.

Nevertheless, she looked over her shoulder more than once, wondering if she would have the courage to face and defy Baron Hector, should he forbid her progress. But no one was stirring at such an early hour, and she reached the garden gate without interruption. But then she heard hasty footsteps, and found that Bianca was following her.

"Kate," said Bianca, coming up breath-

less, "let me go with you!"

There was something more than friendship upon Kate's part to poor friendless Biancs. She loved the girl for her beauty and her gifts, although sometimes the thought came over her that for all her caressing, endearing ways, she was like some wild animal - neither to be loved nor trusted.

"You shall come with me to the hilltop," said Kate, "and wait for me while I

talk to Mother Elspeth."

"Oh, you are going to see the old Sibyl!" exclaimed Bianca. "Will you

ask her to tell my fortune?

Coming into the park they found a picturesque encampment under the trees. The crew of the Cossack had bivouacked there, and half-a-dozen of them jumped to their feet at the sound of the opening gate and scrutinised eagerly the two girls. Bianca spoke to them in her native language.

"It is all Greek to me," said Kate, "Speak French or Italian."

"They were only wishing us good luck,"

said Bianca.

The men threw themselves again on their blankets, watching the girls as they passed with bold, free glances, that made Miss Hazlewood shiver a little as she caught the glitter of their eyes. The next turn past a clump of trees revealed two other figures approaching through the morning mist.

"All the world is matinal this morning,"

murmured Bianca.

"It is my dear boy," said Kate, running to meet Philip, who was a little in advance.

"Philip, are you really safe and sound ?"
"Oh, yes, I'm all right, missie," replied "But I'm not rated as a boy. Philip. I've got my warrant now, thanks to our gallant commander. Perhaps you aren't acquainted with Commander Carr?" said Philip, mischievously.

Kate assumed her most dignified air as she bowed coldly to Ronald, who stood, cap in hand, looking wistfully towards her. But she was burning with curiosity, nevertheless, to hear what he had to say for himself; and what about that young

woman at Hong Kong ?

Thus it happened that the company sorted itself in pairs. Philip fell behind with Bianca, to whom the susceptible sailor had at once surrendered his boyish heart. Kate and Ronald, walking in front, exchanged mutual reproaches for awhile, and then discovered that neither was to Kate had only given up Ronald when she had every reason to think he had proved unworthy, and Ronald, for his part, was able solemnly to aver that her image had constantly occupied his heart to the exclusion of any other girls at Hong Kong or any other part of the globe. It was delightful to Kate to hear all this; but when it was told, what difference did it make ?

An unhappy mistake had been made, but the consequences were now irrevocable. Kate could not forget her pledged word, and then there were all the family arrangements dependent on her marriage with Baron Hector, who could have had nothing to do with the original misunderstanding. Ronald might urge what he pleased, but he could not move the girl's resolve. they stood together on the brow of the hill, and bade each other what might be a last farewell, in full sight of old Hazlewood and the deep purple sea, a white wreath of smoke puffed out from the gunboat, and presently the echoes of a gruff report rolled from one hillside to another. was a signal of recall. Something had happened that required the commander's presence on board. There was a hasty farewell, a sigh, a kiss, and Ronald was

Kate left her companions on the brow of the hill, and descended quickly to her foster-mother's cottage. Here everything was swept and garnished, a bright fire burnt upon the hearth, and the blind girl was busily employed in the preparation of some savoury-smelling stew, of which Mother Elspeth insisted that Kate should partake before she entered upon the pur-

pose of her visit.

"You'll want all your strength, my bairn, before the day is out, and it's ill to

commence a great work fasting."

Mother Elspeth had meantime arranged the sitting-room with some eye to effect. A trophy of weapons, all bright and burnished, appeared at one end-of oldfashioned, smooth-bore, Russian muskets with bright barrels and powder - flasks | Greek and Hebrew characters—exquisitely

depending, and bullet-pouches, such as the grey-coated soldiers bore in the primitive times, as far as weapons of precision were concerned, of the Crimean War. There were cavalry sabres, too, and polished helmets, and beneath was a spirited crayon portrait of an infantry officer of the same remote period, with shako and gold-lace epaulettes, swallow-tailed coat, and crimson sash. On the opposite wall was a curious chart of the heavens, which seemed of Eastern origin, with cabalistic signs sprawling over it, and quaint figures of men and animals aligned upon the various constel-Mother Elspeth's astrological lore was hardly of a scientific character. With judicial astrology she had probably little acquaintance; hers was the traditional lore of shepherds and of gipsies, handed down perhaps by word of mouth, from the days of the witches and warlocks of old times.

But the principal object in the room was an iron casket, curiously wrought and chased, which was placed upon an embroidered cushion, and to which Dame Elspeth brought her foster-child. "My dear bairn," she said, "thy father, on his death-bed, gave this casket into my keeping, to be handed to thee on this the day of thy birth. It is twenty-one years ago to-day since I took thee from the side of thy dead mother. There seemed to be a curse upon the house of Hazlewood, and none of thy brothers and sisters were spared to brighten the old house. And coming to love thee, Kate, as my own child, I speered often and often into the stars to know what was amiss, that it might be turned from thy pretty head. But there was always something that baffled me, as if some spell were at work that was too strong for me to cope with. And even now I cannot fathom it, though I have travelled far and wide to learn the secret. But there may be something in yonder case that may tell thee more than I know, and so I leave thee to it, for that was the promise I made."

Kate, a little fluttered with curiosity and not without trepidation, took the key of the casket from Mother Elspeth and opened it carefully. Within was a lamp as it seemed of pure gold, with suspension chains also of gold. The body of the lamp was curiously enamelled, and all round were empty sockets that had once, it was evident, been filled with precious stones. Beneath was an inscription in

chased and curiously ornamented. Below the lamp was a letter addressed in characters which Kate recognised for her father's, to

"my daughter Kate."

"My dear child," began the letter, "although I have not yet reached the limit of the allotted span of life, yet I feel my end approaching, and can no longer delay to make a confession of sin and sacrilege which have long burdened my conscience, and made my days unhappy. My narrative goes back to the date of the beginning of the Crimean War. I landed with the rest at Old Fort in the Crimea. I led my company into action at the battle of the Alma, and on the evening of the third or fourth day after that victory, I found myself with an outlying picket on the extreme left flank of the allied armies. Our march had been wild and hazardous; for we had abandoned our base, to seek a fresh one on the further side of the great fortified arsenal of Sebastopol. Towards the end of the day we had come in contact with a Russian force, which proved afterwards to be one of the retreating columns of the army we had defeated, shortly before. At the time, however, we were quite in the dark as to the meaning of our rencontre, and I, with a portion of my company, were hurried forward with instructions to push on and feel for the enemy, and not to rest till we had found him.

"As daylight faded away we found ourselves marching up a delightful little valley, watered by a stream that descended from wooded heights which formed cool and delightful vistas, while in the distance rose the peaks of distant mountains glowing in the pearly hues of sunset. for aught we knew, these pleasant woodland slopes might be bristling with armed men. Halting my little force on the margin of the stream, I left them to prepare their evening meal while I advanced alone for a few hundred yards to reconnoitre the valley beyond. A little way in front opened out the ravine of a tributary stream, and here were limestone rocks all overgrown with creepers, and a broad, wellused bridle-path which I began cautiously to explore. The path brought me presently to a chapel crowned by a little dome, with its green roof and gilded cross. building was of white marble, with polished and variegated columns of the same material. I entered; the place was empty, but bore traces of recent hasty evacuation. Pictures had been removed, hangings had been hastily snatched away, and everything

moveable that was of value, had been carried off. The gilt and fretted doors of the sanctuary were ajar. I peered within: the ornaments of the altar, and its silvergilt plate were wanting; but overhead hung a beautiful lamp, which was still burning, and which seemed to have been overlooked in the hurry of departure.

"I do not know what possessed me at that moment. Perhaps I regarded the lamp as fair spoil of war. A few days of rough campaigning, with the heat and stress of battle and the familiar spectacle of death and destruction, tend to blunt The French Zouaves, the moral sense. too, were following in our track, and I felt sure that they would not scruple to appropriate anything that was left behind. I seized the lamp, extinguished it, and placed it carefully in my haversack. moment I felt a horrible sense of oppression, and a strange dizziness and murmur-ing in the ears. I staggered towards the open air, and then in the almost darkness of the building, I was suddenly seized by the throat by a powerful hand.

"I struck desperately out and the hilt of my sword descended heavily on the head of my assailant, and he rolled helplessly on the ground. At that moment I heard shots fired outside, and believing that my post was attacked, I darted out and ran in the direction of the firing. After all it was a false alarm—an advanced sentry had fired upon an advancing horseman, luckily without touching him, for he proved to be one of our staff-officers who had come with orders to withdraw to the main body. Lord Raglan had taken possession of the little land-locked harbour of Balaclava, and was in full communication with the fleet and

transports.

"For a long time I thought no more of the sacred lamp that I had purloined. With the new and irksome duties attending the conduct of the siege, with the weary work of the trenches, varied only by an occasional brush with the enemy, any time I might have for reflection, was sufficiently occupied with the thought of home embarrassments. I was poor—I had been extravagant. If our army swore horribly in Flanders, it not only swore but gambled horribly during the Eastern campaign. I lost more money than I could pay, and I applied to my cousin Fred to help me. He was at that time at the Embassy at Constantinople—over head and ears in debt, but always ready to dip himself a little deeper. We had bills rolling

up in common, and by Greek or Jew, he could always manage to set another one going. Fred was always great in curios, and he was continually writing to me to send him objects of interest from the battle-field. I sent him a batch of things by one of ours who was invalided, and among them I placed the sacred lamp.

"Fred's next letter to me was of a most jubilant nature. He had raised plenty of money on our joint account, and he sent me Treasury bills for as much as I wanted. This increased facility in raising money I attributed to the chance I had of inheriting the Hazlewood estate from the death of my two cousins—of which you have often heard—at the battle of the Alma. All the same the estate was not entailed, and my crotchety uncle might leave it to whom

he pleased.

"Well, if we got plenty of hard work and abundant chances of wounds and death, promotion was also rapid. I landed at Old Fort a penniless subaltern, I was Major when Inkermann was fought, and brought the regiment out of action. Then I was Colonel and C.B. My feelings in the meantime had altered a good deal. I had given up dicing and drinking, and had begun to admonish my own subs on the enormity of such courses. Soon after, in an unsuccessful assault on a Russian redoubt, I was desperately wounded and left for dead in the Russian lines. But happening to groan as their burying parties were at work, I was picked up and sent to a military hospital.

"When I came to a knowledge of things about me, I found myself the object of much kind attention from some Russian ladies, the wife and daughters of Count Sards, who had a villa in the neighbourhood of Simpheropol, to which place Especially kind I had been removed. was the youngest daughter, Catherine. As I recovered a little she would come and read to me, and talk to me about home in the most engaging manner. After a time the Count had me removed to his own château. He knew England well, and had even visited my uncle at Hazlewood, and by his means my friends were informed of

my safety.

"Catherine was devout without being bigoted. Resting so long within the shadow of death, I, too, had turned my thoughts With faltering voice, she towards heaven. had often read to me the offices of our Church. As I recovered, it was often my privilege to accompany her to the services enough to steal the lamp from the altar,

of her own, the Greek Church. A sacred sympathy united us; her influence aroused in me all that was best and highest in my

"By the time I was fit for service, the war was practically at an end. News had come of my poor uncle's death, and that he had bequeathed Hazlewood to me, who was, indeed, his natural successor. Then I besought the Count for his daughter's hand. I was accepted; we were married; and we went to spend our honeymoon at the Count's more southern villa at Aloupka, a charming spot, sweet, retired, blissful.

"Shortly after our marriage, on one happy Sunday morning, my wife proposed that we should attend a neighbouring church within an easy distance of the villa. It was the Church of Saint Catherine, for which she felt a filial kind of affection. On the way-what a delightful way !-she told me the story of the church. How an Empress Catherine passing this way, her carriage rolled over into the stream, and she was only saved from destruction by the special interposition of her patron saint. For there was the church close at hand, and thus dedicated, and upon this little church the Empress lavished the choicest gifts. Chief of all was a magnificent lamp that had been one of the treasures of the Sultan, and that he had presented as a peace offering to the conquering Empress. The lamp, according to the tradition, had once hung before the Holy Sepulchre, ere it fell into the hands of the infidel. Enamelled with the choicest work of early Byzantine art, it was encrusted with jewels of price, and one vacant socket had been filled by the Empress with a ruby of immense value. Round the bowl of the lamp was an inscription in Greek and Hebrew characters, invoking a curse of the most terrible character on any who removed this lamp from the sanctuary. So potent was deemed this malediction, that when the alarm was given that the allied armies had landed in the Crimea, and that the forces of the great Czar had been routed, while the other treasures of the church were removed and hidden, nobody ventured to carry away the lamp; but one of the priests of the neighbouring convent volunteered to remain and defend the sacred vessel even with his life.

"'But,' continued my wife in a tone of scorn and indignation, 'there was found among the invaders some one base enough to violate the house of God, avaricious cruel enough to murder its guardian on the very steps of the inmost sanctuary; but

God's vengeance will follow him.'

"My daughter, I recognised everything at a glance: the church among the woods, the bridle-path that led into the valley where we had bivouacked. I was the man whom my wife had justly denounced as beyond the pale of human sympathy.

"You will say that I ought to have confessed, to have owned my evil deed, and sought to make atonement. I think so now; but then it was impossible. My wife would have shrunk from me as if I had been a leper; my name, my reputation would have sunk lower than those of the meanest thief. Was I called upon to be my own accuser—with my own hand to shatter every hope in life? I had not the courage to do it. The only practicable course was to maintain inviolable silence as to the whole affair. And this I have done. Till you read this confession, not a soul shares with me the shameful secret. Fred might have suspected it, but he is dead, and by my marriage with the second Lady Hazlewood I have come into possession of all his papers, and there is not a trace of it. But he has a son, Hector; beware of him.

"But as far as was in my power I tried to make amends. I could not restore the life I had destroyed. All through my own existence I have felt that I bore the mark of Cain upon me. But the lamp, I might perhaps recover that and secretly restore

"By this time my cousin Fred had made Constantinople too hot to hold him. But I traced him to Odessa, where he was trading among his Greek connections; and I questioned him as to the lamp. He acknowledged that he had sold the precious stones out of it for a large amount. Some of the money had gone in taking up bills that bore my signature as well as his ownother part had helped to establish him in business. No part of it was available just The body of the lamp-which was valuable as a rare antiquity above its intrinsic worth-he had pledged with a Jew in Constantinople, from whom I eventually recovered it.

"It was always in my mind to restore the lamp to the sanctuary in the same state as when I stole it; but many things interposed to turn me from my design. When your mother died - my poor Catherine—I thought that I had suffered wrath poured upon my head. But when a laughing, mocking glance.

I saw you, dear Kate, growing up a beautiful image of your beautiful mother, I began to tremble lest you, too, should expiate your father's sin in untimely death. You have been preserved so far, and mainly through the love and care that my faithful friend Elspeth bestowed upon your early years.

"And now I lay this task upon you—to restore the lamp to its former splendour, and to deposit it secretly in the place whence I took it. The means are provided in the bequest of twenty thousand pounds, which you will receive on your twenty-first birthday. Till this is accomplished I feel that I shall never enter into my final rest.

"Not long ago your mother appeared to me in a vision, her face troubled, as it were, by mingled love and sorrow. 'The task is not for you,' she said, mournfully; 'the sacrilege must be atoned for by pure maiden hands.' She vanished; but her words remained engraved upon my mind, and I knew that my time would be short, and that I must leave the rest to you. have no strength to write more.-Your loving FATHER.

Attached to the letter was a memorandum of practical instructions for her guidance, which Kate put by for future perusal. Then, having noted down the various names and places mentioned in her father's narrative, she carefully burnt the letter. Whatever might happen, her father's secret should be faithfully kept. But could she accept the task that was set

before her !

"Yes, I accept it," said Kate, aloud, after a few moments' painful thought. "I undertake my father's debt, and will pay it!"

And she felt with joyous emotion that now, for the first time since she had come under the Baron's influence, she had attained a thorough freedom of volition. She no longer dreaded him, or felt her spirit overborne by his, while her eyes, unveiled, beheld the man in his real character-cruel, avaricious-an embodiment of lawless and destructive force.

It was well that her mind was thus braced and strengthened, and, indeed, she had need of all her powers. At that moment she heard a slight jarring sound from the casement, and there, framed in the window, and dark against the outer glow, was the bold, handsome head and massive shoulders of the Baron, who, leaning upon all that could be suffered from the vials of the window-sill, was looking at Kate with

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE CLIFFS AT WHITEY.

A DESPATCH from the Admiralty, which had been brought to the Widgeon by the coastguard, had caused the second in command to make signals for the recall of his chief. Complaints had been made of wilful damage done some nights ago to the nets and tackle of English boats by certain French fishermen. The matter was to come before a French court at Boulogne in the course of a few days. The Widgeon was to collect those English fishermen who could give evidence of the facts, some of whom were with the fishing fleet, while others were to be found at various parts along the coast; she was then to run across the Channel to Boulogne, and remain in that port till the fishing case had been heard.

There was nothing for it but to obey orders; and soen after her commander had gone on board, the Widgeon's anchor was weighed, and she steamed off to the northward, in which direction the greater part of the fishing fleet was now at work. The Widgeon's gunner, however, was left ashore; his commander had given him

leave of absence for a few days.

The business of picking up the fishermen proved less troublesome than might have been expected. The men, by some mysterious understanding among each other, seemed to know that they were wented, and came aboard without being sent for. But several men were on board a boat that had run into Whitby to refit, and the Widgeon came to an anchor outside the harbour, and Lieutenant Carr went ashore.

On a bright sunshiny morning Whitby seemed to be all white and sparkling, with its handsome pier and jetties, its tall lighthouses, and its terraces climbing up the cliff, and massed upon its summit. contrast was the old town, rugged and brown, and the dark mass of the lofty height crowned by the gloomy-looking old church, behind which stood "High Whitby's clustered pile," or such ragged remnants of its ruins as time and tempests had spared. Then there were the cheerful lines of shops, where Whitby jet was not to be passed over without notice; and in other matters as gay and showy as could be found in any seaside resort. And you looked over from the shops to the black fishing-cobles bobbing up and down in the tideway, and to the coasting steamer dis-

charging its cargo, and to one or two ancient-looking brigs, where something in the way of hauling or pulling was going on. Military music sounded from the heights, and mingled with the "heave ho!" of the sailors, just as a fragrant whiff of tar mingled every now and then with the essences and bouquets from the perfumer's

shop.

Ronald was busy enough at Whitby, and had little time to think over his troubles. The fishing case had excited great interest in the town, and the commander of the gunboat was in great request among the notables of the place. Magistrates buttonholed him; the M.P. of the district had a word for his ear, and local reporters watched him up and down, and darted upon him, hoping to extract materials for paragraphs from his unguarded utter-Then there were papers to be ances. prepared, declarations to be made to this and that, and all kinds of official worries

to be perpetrated.

As the day went or, the weather changed very much for the worse. The gentle westerly breeze was replaced by a searching wind from the north, which rose at times to a gale, and brought with it seething clouds and whirling storm, such as cast a gloom over everything. rose too, and between wind and tide there was such a surf and fluster outside, that open boats were likely to fare badly in it. The gunboat had been pitching heavily at her anchors, and to ease the strain upon them she was now steaming slowly ahead. Another craft further out, which was, in fact, Baron Hector's yacht, the Cossack, was also having a lively time of it; sometimes half lost to sight in the trough of the sea, and again rolling about in the green waters, till she showed the lowest streak of her copper sheathing.

Ronald had been so taken up with his duties ashore, that he had scarcely had time to speculate as to what had happened at Hazlewood. It came with something like a shock upon him to see his uncle, the Admiral, drive in to the town, and deposit Mr. Smith at his bank; the black bag a matter of no consideration now, and Mr. Smith evidently much easier in his mind.

"Well, it's all over, Ronald," cried the Admiral, hailing his nephew from afar. "Baron and Baroness fairly spliced."

Ronald experienced the feeling of relief of a resolute man, quitted of the vain turmoil of hope and fear, and steadfast to endure the worst that can befall him.

But the Admiral beckoned to his nephew to follow him into a sitting-room of the hotel. "Ronald, my boy, it was lucky for you that we broke with the Hazlewoods. What do you think the little baggage has done now? Run away! The bride of an hour, and run away from her husband! And what's more," cried the Admiral, with an appreciative chuckle, "I'm dashed if I don't think she has carried off with her the

twenty thousand pounds.

Even as the Admiral was speaking, a little crowd was gathered about a hoarding opposite the hotel, where some one was posting a huge bill that was headed: "One thousand pounds reward," and announced that a daring robbery had been effected at Hazlewood House that afternoon. A casket had been stolen, containing golden ornaments and twenty notes of a thousand pounds each, the numbers of which were given A description followed of the supposed thieves—an elderly woman who had made her way into the grounds on the previous evening under the guise of a gipsy fortune-teller-with a tolerably faithful description of the personal appearance of Mother Elspeth, and a young man in the garb of a sailor, supposed to have deserted from one of her Majesty's ships. Not a word was said as to any other person who might be implicated in the disappearance of the casket.

"A clever move, by jingo," cried the Admiral, when he had mastered the contents of the bill. "The police will capture the whole party. Kate will be handed over to the Baron, and he will carry her off with the twenty thousand pounds, and

the affair will be hushed up!"

At this moment one of the boat's crew from the Widgeon lounged up to the knot of people who were reading the bill, and began to pick out its contents for himself. The boat's crew that had been waiting for its commander all the day, had not been without hospitable entertainment from the townsfolk of Whitby. It was made up of steady fellows, but the steadiest are not always proof against a constant succession of friendly pledgings. All that the seaman could gather of the contents of the bill was that in some way a comrade, who wore the Queen's uniform, was accused of a disgraceful theft. With an impulse of righteous indignation, the man seized a corner of the bill, ripped it from the wall, and trampled it under his feet. The crowd laughed and applauded, and there probably the incident would have ended. But just | of peace.

then a four-horse coach drove up from Hazlewood, the Baron driving, his face as black as a thunder cloud, and the coach loaded with the foreign seamen of the Cossack. The Baron sprang from the coach box, beckoned to the bill-poster, who stood close by, open-mouthed, with his paste-box and sheaf of bills, and bade him replace the bill that had just been torn down. As soon as the wet sheet was once more displayed, the seaman tore it down again.

By this time more of the crew of the Widgeon had come up, and the seamen of the yacht had swarmed about the scene of contest. A blow was struck, knives and cutlasses gleamed in the air. There was a stampede of foot passengers and idlers. The alarm spread, shopkeepers rattled up their shutters, vehicles drew up at a safe distance, doors were barred and upper windows thrown open, with the heads and shoulders of curious gazers protruding

everywhere.

Ronald had now at a couple of bounds reached the scene, and thrusting back the combatants on either side, at the imminent risk of his life, called to his men to stand together and face the excited group of foreign yachtsmen. For a civilised crew they were certainly a wild and fierce-looking company. There were Greeks among them, Italians, and Maltese, and others whose nationality it would be difficult to guess at. But there was some amount of discipline among them; and when the Baron-who had hitherto stood aloof with folded arms and viewed the fight with amused indifference - interfered with a gesture of authority, they drew back, panting and quivering with excitement.

"Get your men on board," cried Baron Hazlewood to the Captain of his yacht. "Hire a steam-tug, if you like; but get

them on board."

The men filed off towards the harbour, some of them limping a little, and others tying up broken heads and muttering maledictions and curses.

"And now, commander," said the Baron, addressing Ronald, "a word with you, if

you please."

The two walked up and down together, apparently in amicable converse, in front of the hotel. As the sounds of combat had abated and ceased, the town resumed its former tranquillity, shutters were taken down, windows deserted, vehicles moved on, and a strong body of police massed at one end of the quay ensured the continuance "If you, my young friend, are Lieutenant Carr," said the Baron in an undertone, "you will understand that our quarrel cannot be decided in a street row. I believe that you are concerned in the abduction of my wife, and I give you fair warning, that if you meddle farther in the matter, I will kill you!"

"Baron," replied Ronald, with equal politeness, "I regret that the uniform I wear prevents me from caning you on the spot. I only hope that we may meet under more favourable circumstances ere long."

"A bientôt, then," said the Baron, raising his hat. "You shall hear from me shortly."

"The sooner the better," said Ronald,

saluting politely.

"Ronald," cried the Admiral, who had witnessed the apparently amicable interview from the window of the hotel. "Ronald!" he repeated, severely, taking his nephew by the arm; "I wouldn't have believed it of you."

"What do you mean, uncle?"

"Why, that you'd have let that fellow crow over you like that."

"What would you have done, then,

Admiral ?"

"I should have applied at once for leave, and gone out with the fellow."

"And if leave had been refused ?"
"I'd have resigned my commission."
"And if your resignation had not been

accepted \$"
"Why, dash it; I'd have deserted, sir.

I'd have deserted, fought the man, and took my trial."

"That is just what I mean to do," said

Ronald, calmly.

"What! leave the service—ruin your prospects! Think well of it, sir! You shan't have a penny from me if you do!" The Admiral took a short turn and darted up the steps of the hotel. "Dash it," he muttered, as he went. "If he smashes that dashed Baron, I'll leave him Carrholme and every sixpence I'm worth."

There was something of a crowd at the pierhead to witness the departure of the foreign seamen. There were two boatloads of them, and the boats were in tow of a powerful tug to carry them through the current, that went like a mill-stream through the harbour mouth, and the wild surf that dashed over the bar. The mano'-war's boat soon followed, but that trusted only to the strong arms of its rowers, and to the skill of him who handled the

tiller. Several fishermen of the town were in the boat with their kits, and their wives and families were in full force, supported by friendly hands, upon the coping of the pier, and waving and screaming enthusiastic adieux. Then night fell over the scene, and the boats were lost to view.

Both wind and sea moderated as the tide ran out, and the wind being fair for coasting southwards, the commander of the Widgeon got his boat under sail, and the engine fires were banked up with a view of saving coal and earning the approval of official heads. The Widgeon was not a flyer under sail, but with a fair wind she ran in a leisurely way along the coast, past ghostly grey cliffs and bold headlands, where the surf made a pearly fringe along the shore. For a few miles on each side of Whitby, a broad band of sandy beach stretches beneath the tall, beetling cliffs, but the sands gradually tail off, and then the waves wash the very bases of the cliffs, and in stormy weather tumble, roar, and sport among cliffs and caverns in a wild, tumultuous way.

All along the coast Ronald had kept a sharp look out upon the shore. In some way or other he felt sure that Elspeth Brook, or her son, Philip, would twy and communicate with him, and knowing as they did every cliff and cranny along the coast, they would have had little difficulty in finding a hiding-place within view of

the sea.

But he looked for a light on the heights, and behold the one he sought flashed out from the very margin of the sea. A white strip of sand lay in the hollow between two beetling cliffs, and from some hidden cleft on the level of the sands a light shone out in intermittent flashes. Ronald was skilled in all the lore of signalling, and he saw at once that the longer and shorter flashes represented the dots and dashes of the Morse system of telegraphy. He read it as easily as a book, when once his attention was called to it. The Widgeon's number was repeated again and again, till Ronald seized a hand lamp and waved it in the air as an acknowledgement of the signal, when the flashes spelled out:

"Three stranded here; take us off."
Ronald brought the ship to, and in a few minutes was being rowed rapidly to the shore. As the boat's keel touched the strand he sprang out, and was received by Philip Brook.

"Missie is here," he said, "and mother oo. We've been hunted as if we were

thieves, and we might have been drowned on this spit of sand; but we are all right now, and Missie must tell you the story herself."

Kate now came forward from the rocky recess where the party had taken refuge.

"Ronald, you will take care of me, and help me, and you will not give me up."

"You may trust me, Kate," said Ronald, "but tell me"-in a whisper-"has that man any right to call you wife ?"

"I am not his wife," said Kate, firmly,

"and never will be."

"My dears," said Elspeth Brook, who had hitherto remained in the background, "I have been reading the stars for you, and they tell me that the path is long and difficult, but the end will be bright if you win through to it."

The fugitives were taken on board, and the boat proceeded on its way. "I have no luggage except this," said Kate, laughing, and holding up the casket which was enclosed in a leather case, "and yet we have far to travel. Where is our first stopping place, mother ? Vienna, is it not?"

"I can't take you to Vienna," said Ronald; "but I can land you at Boulogne, and once on board the train you are safe.

He had asked no questions except that first one; but he wondered what it all meant and how it would end.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNCONSCIOUS BRIDE

WHAT it all meant, must be told as nearly as possible in Kate Hazlewood's own words, as she told the story on the quarter-deck of the Widgeon to Ronald's attentive ears, as the boat glided gently along beneath the tall cliffs of the Yorkshire coast

When the Baron surprised Miss Hazlewood at her foster-mother's cottage, his manner, mocking and sarcastic at first, was soon marked by an assumption of stern authority. Kate accompanied him back to Hazlewood meekly enough, but on the way she found courage to inform him of her final decision. As to marrying him on that day, it was out of the question. Even if her own feelings permitted it, she was prevented by her late father's wishes. Her father had left her a certain trust to accomplish, and for the next six months she would be occupied in its fulfilment. Then, if her task was accomplished, and he wished her to carry out her promise, she would do so.

All this the Baron said was beside the question. He was here to marry her, and marry her he would. His affairs required his immediate presence in the East, and he intended to marry her that day, and to take her on board his yacht as soon as the ceremony was over, when they would sail at once for the East. These arrangements admitted of no question; the clergyman had been summoned to attend, the special license had been obtained, the ceremony would take place at three o'clock in the Hazlewood drawing-room. As for her father, he was dead, and any wishes he might have had were dead too, except so far as they were of legal force.

To this Kate replied shortly that she

had decided, and that nothing would alter

her decision.

"We shall see," said the Baron, with

equal brevity.

Breakfast passed over in a state of armed truce. After breakfast the legal business commenced. Kate signed a release to her trustees, and the Admiral handed over to her the notes representing twenty thousand pounds which Mr. Smith of the bank produced from his black bag. The Admiral advised her to return the notes to Mr. Smith, and leave the money in the bank till she had occasion for it. As she did not respond to the suggestion, there was nothing more to be said. Mr. Smith retired, greatly relieved to find that the bag was going back empty, for the appearance of those cut-throat - looking sailors in the Baron's suite made him feel extremely nervous. The Admiral remained to luncheon by Lady Hazlewood's special request. He was required as a witness of the marriage.

Kate retired to her own room, determined to remain there till the hour named for the wedding had passed. Her money she placed in the steel casket, where it would be always ready for its purpose. No long time elapsed before Lady Hazlewood came to her and urged her tearfully to submit to Hector's wishes. But Kate remained

"You will never persuade me, and you

cannot force me to marry him."

Bianca came presently, not to persuade, but to weep, to sympathise, to console. She was strangely moved at the prospect of the Baron's marriage, now for the first time realising it fully as imminent. She remembered, too, with bitter self-reproach, that her own treachery had brought about the catastrophe. She had lost her Hector

through the very devotion with which she had served him. Falling upon Kate's neck, Bianca made a full confession. How she loved Hector, and would do anything in the world to serve him, and how he had tempted her to act as traitress and spy. Here was confirmation for Kate's purpose, were any needed.

Then came Lady Hazlewood, with a last appeal. The Vicar of Blackness, Ronald's father it will be remembered, had arrived to read the service; everything in the drawing-room was arranged for the ceremony; the upper servants had been warned to attend. "Oh, Kate! do not make a

scene at the last !"

"I shall make no scene," Kate had replied. "I shall remain here."

"Then at least would she grant the Baron a final interview in the library ?"

"Willingly," said Kate. Indeed, she would have requested such an interview herself, to denounce the engagement between them, as brought about by his, the

Baron's, fraud and treachery.

The library at Hazlewood was in a quiet, secluded part of the mansion, where an oriel window looked over into an old-fashioned walled garden, with shaded lime walks, quaint box hedges, and in the centre, a velvet lawn and a sun-dial. There was no one in the room when Kate entered it, and fatigued with emotion, she threw herself upon an old-fashioned couch by the window and closed her eyes in utter weariness. When she opened them again, the Baron stood before her, burly and powerful, in black evening costume, with a great diamond gleaming like a star upon his chest

"Kate!" he cried, seizing her firmly by the wrist, "I approach you now not as lover or future husband, but as physician. Your nerves are overwrought, your judgement impaired; sleep, I command you,

sleep!"

In vain Kate summoned all her forces to resist this man's strange influence, she felt herself wrapped up in a strange, benumbing dream; her eyes closed, her limbs relaxed; she was lost in a slumberous Then she had some confused trance. remembrance of moving here and there, and seeing people about her; and she might have repeated any words that were put into her mind by the influence that controlled her; but whether these impressions were real or only imprinted upon her mind, she could not tell.

All that Kate knew with certainty was,

that she came to herself suddenly. The pressure on her brain had been waved away; she was in the fresh air and clinging

to her foster-mother's arms.

Dame Elspeth had little to add to this account. She had been warned of Kate's danger; she had found her way into the house by the good offices of one of the old servants, and had discovered Kate in her own room, in a kind of trance, upon a couch, with her precious casket, however, beneath her head. Flinging her own cloak about her, she led her away into the open air. For some reason or other the watch that had been kept about the house had been relaxed. The crew of the Cossack were all clustered about the front of the house, raising frantic cries, that were meant, perhaps, for cries of joy, at a given signal. There was little difficulty in getting clear of the house, and by the lodge gate Philip was waiting with a country cart and fast horse, and away they drove to a friendly farmhouse on the coast towards Whitby.

The hue and cry after Kate must have been raised very soon after her escape, and the energetic measures taken by the Baron put the fugitives into a dilemma. Kate had made up her mind to follow her father's instructions to the letter, and these were that she should make her way to Vienna and put herself in communication with a certain jeweller there, who would give her full assistance in her task; and what was more easy than to drive to the nearest station and take train for London, whence any part of the world can be reached by one in possession of means? But the audacious move of the Baron's put this out of the question. Dame Elspeth and Philip would certainly be seized by the police, en route, and Kate herself would be virtually a prisoner, and completely in the Baron's power. But Philip knew the course that the Widgeon would take, and that his commander was not likely to take the Baron's part in the matter, and so the party had taken refuge under the cliffs, and had happily been successful in attracting attention from the

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CHAPTER VL.

COAST SCENES. SCARBOROUGH TO DOVER.

THE sun rose behind a tranquil sea as the Widgeon, bearing up in the bay, took up her moorings in full view of Scarborough. No greater contrast can be imagined, than that between the lonely

grandeur of beetling cliffs and lovely headlands, and the colour, brightness, and verdure of the amphitheatre of noble buildings, terraces, gardens, that opens out to view. Even the rugged promontory, the scaur, that gives its name to the town, crowned by a battered Norman keep, has a festal aspect; its grass-covered plateau dotted with white tents, where some volunteers have pitched their camp, while a bugle-call rings out, and rattling drums sound the réveille. The town, perhaps, is not matinal, it is too gay at nights to get up very early in the morning; but signs of life soon begin to appear; there are toilers by the sea surrounded by this colony of pleasure-seekers; light wreaths of smoke rise to the heavens; bathers appear; early attendants at the Spa; boats begin to dart about, and white sails to flit upon the waters.

"Why should I not go ashore?" said Kate, as she gazed upon the scene spread out before her from the deck of the Widgeon. "I have an outfit to buy for my travels, and here I shall find everything I want." Dame Elspeth had nothing to say against it, except to warn her to be careful. A shore boat was hailed and Kate was soon busy among the shops, while Ronald, in mufti, strolled about and smoked his cigar, and kept a careful lookout for any signs of danger. A boat-load of luggage was sent on board, the owner of the luggage followed, and then the boat having picked up another fisherman or two, east off just as the first strains of the band from the promenade thrilled over the sea; and away she went, under full ateam now, for the wind had failed altogether, with her nose well out to ses, turning a furrow of blue water, that frothed and sparkled in her wake. Filey was just seen with its sharp ridge of rocks rising like the back of a gigantic saurian out of the sea, and Flamborough Head being left on the port beam, the long, low coast that succeeded, with hardly a bay or indentation, was soon lost to sight in the autumnal

But for the smoke of the steamers running out, or coming in, Humber mouth might have been passed without notice, and the flats of Lincolnshire were so mixed up with sand banks, half-covered shoals and channels, that it could hardly be identified as belonging either to land or water. All was sea, and sand, and haze till the coast of Norfolk was sighted; Cromer, with its red cliffs; and Caistor, with castle turrets

peeping over the trees; and Yarmouth, spread along the sands with its windmills and tall watch towers and Nelson's column on the Denes; and Gorleston pier, where the harbour mouth is, and where the fishing boats are beating in and out, or a row of smacks are trailing after some fussy little tug. Then comes Lowestoft, brown and comely, with piers and lighthouse, and a general air of bustle and well-doing; and now Southwold comes in sight, straggling

along its steep open beach.

As night came on, Harwich blinked at the passing ship with round, staring eyes, lamps gleamed from the Essex shore, and, in the soft lambent glow, white-sailed ships seemed to hang in the air, and coloured lights shone over the sea and were reflected in the gently undulating waters. And still the boat cut its lone furrow through the waves; and just as morning dawned again, folk on shore were putting out the lamps along the sea front of Margate and Ramsgate, and rosy sunshine gleamed upon the white chalk cliffs that seem so home-like and English in their contours. Presently they were in the Downs, among a whole fleet of ships, and Deal boatmen hailed them with suggestions of stores and soft tack. Battlements and bedroom windows blinked upon them from Walmer Castle, cosily nestled among the trees, and Saint Margaret showed herself gleaming among her wooded heights. Then there was the long, low coast-line, with only tufts of trees and the spires of village churches, as land or sea marks, till the white wall of cliffs appears again, and there is Dover, with its majestic line of towers and curtain walls rising high above the sea.

What a happy unconventional cruise it had been. Kate, relieved from her fears of the overpowering influence of the Baron, recovered her former gaiety of spirit and light-heartedness. Everything on board interested her—the details of the day's work, the discipline, the drill, and all the devices by which the sailors varied the monotony of their lives at sea. But now the steamer's head was turned for the French coast, and the voyage would soon be at an end, and she had before her all the long wearisome journey over land and sea, with only her fostermother to bear her company.

as belonging either to land or water. All was sea, and sand, and haze till the coast of Norfolk was sighted; Cromer, with its red cliffs; and Caistor, with castle turrets fisher-girls, and blue blouses, and the

clatter and cheerful jingle of a foreign town.

Next scene was the lighted "Gare" and the gloomy-looking train drawn up with its "wagon lits" and massive luggage vans; there was the tumult and bustle of the arrival of passengers from the boat that had just come in, and then it was necessary to say Farewell!

CHAPTER VII.

ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

IT was not to be expected that Baron Hector would permit his prey to escape him without some effort to detain her. was possible that the Continental police had been apprised of the pretended robbery, and that the travellers might be arrested. And as the examination of tickets was made at Boulogne and stern - looking officials scrutinised the faces of passengers, a thrill of excitement was felt by Kate and But they passed unher companion. questioned, and it may be assumed that the Baron was too wise to have taken any such false step. The device of the pretended robbery and the thousand pounds reward, might at first have answered admirably as a means of bringing back Kate into the Baron's power; but when required to be supported by formal evidence and brought into the light of day, the result could only have been a scandal that would cover the Baron with ignominy and render him a byword among men.

Still the fear of her pursuer was strong upon Kate. She dreaded the appearance of his dark, saturnine face; she doubted her own power of resistance to his overbearing influence. If only Ronald could have stayed with her; but that was impossible. He had only had time to put her on board the train and to bid her farewell, when he was hurried away to run to the assistance of his cargo of fishermen, who had been badly received by their French confrères, and who were likely to get into trouble with the authorities in consequence. But as the train was moving off, and in spite of the vigorous protests of the officials, a passenger flung himself into the carriage. It was Philip, almost unrecognisable in his shore-going clothes without any seafaring trappings about him.

"The Captain and I," said Philip, when he recovered breath for an explanation, "we put our heads together. 'If you don't go, Brook,' said he, 'I must. To leave that girl and your mother to travel all that distance without anybody to take care of them——' No, it wouldn't do, we agreed, and so I took my discharge, and here I am."

"You foolish boy," said Kate; "it is we who shall have to take care of you."

But she was greatly pleased after all, and Philip's presence gave her a feeling of security which she had not felt before. At the next station Philip left for a carriage where he could enjoy a smoke. But he was at hand at every stoppage to see how they were getting on. And although he knew but few words of French, yet he made such adroit use of these, and was so soon on terms of perfect intimacy with all belonging to the train, being universally recognised as "un brave bonome," that everything was done for the comfort of his charge.

"I'm the courier," said Philip, "and mother's the dame de compagnie. That's what they call us, and we are on our way to see our uncle who is a great swell in the Crimea. I have told everybody all

about us."

At Paris a halt was made for some days at the Grand Hotel. Kate had many purchases to make, and if she were to make a creditable appearance among her unknown relatives, it was necessary that she should have dresses-many dressesand all kinds of feminine adornment Kate changed one of her notes for a thousand pounds, and as there were no subsequent reclamations on the subject, it is to be presumed that the Baron had given up the idea of stopping payment of Kate's own money. Dame Elspeth, too, was transformed. The homespun garments, which had been suitable enough for the Yorkshire moors, were exchanged for black satin, and a cloak and a hat, "a la Pythonesse," as the manteau-maker exclaimed, who had an infallible eye for the characteristics of the female figure. And all trimmed with the "vrai jais de Whitby!" added the man milliner, which was a gratifying tribute to the celebrity of our native products. Philip, too, must be arrayed with dignity. He cast longing eyes on a costume, "a l'Honved," with fur pelisse and braided jacket-for your sailor's secret envy and admiration is for the dashing horseman and his braverybut he was persuaded out of this, and assumed a flat muffin cap, and surtout, bordered with Astrachan lamb's skin, such To leave as gentlemen couriers affect.

At Paris, passports were obtained which were necessary for travelling in Russian dominions, and the party set out for Strasbourg, where a halt was made for the night, and a hasty visit made to the Cathedral. The next stopping place was Augsburg, that ancient city of the Susbians, whose medieval streets, fountains, and palaces were duly admired. And the day brought the travellers to Munich, where they rested, and where Kate spent a couple of happy days among the art galleries. And then a fatiguing railway journey brought them to Vienna, where a stay of some weeks was necessary.

In the Ring Strasse of Vienna dwelt Ivan Vasilovitch, a famous jeweller, and dealer in objects of art. He received Kate Hazlewood with great distinction in a salon adorned with choicest specimens of bronze and silver ware. He received into his hands the golden lamp, which Kate produced from the casket with reverential respect. It was a most interesting example of ancient art, he said, Byzantine, and of the very best period. He referred to a richly bound volume filled with choice engravings, and turned to a certain page, which he offered for Kate Hazlewood's inspection. Here was an illustration and description of the very lamp itself, with a note that it had been formerly in the possession of the Empress Catherine of Russia, but that its present owner was un-

known.

"And from this sketch you will have no difficulty in restoring the lamp and insert-

ing its proper setting of jewels."

"No, mademoiselle," replied the jeweller,
"but the expense will be considerable; especially to replace the ruby which occupied the central boss. Considerable research would be necessary to procure such a stone. Still all things were possible

for the wealthy."

As the wily Russian had already in his possession the very stone required, eventually he agreed to undertake the work, which he estimated at about six thousand pounds. There was a considerable margin between this sum and that bequeathed by Sir John. But then the priest, who was slain by the altar, there was blood-money due for him; and it was possible that he had left descendants—for Russian priests often marry—and these must be duly compensated.

From Vienna, Kate wrote to Count Sarda, at Aloupka, announcing her intended visit to the Crimea. The answer came within a week. The Count, wrote his wife, was charmed at the prospect of making acquaintance with his English niece. He would have come himself to vienna, to escort her, but he was unfortunately laid up with a severe attack of gout. But his yacht, the Yalta, should meet her party at Odessa; only let his niece send a message by telegraph to say when the yacht should be there.

It was very pleasant for Kate to find that she would be welcome among her mother's people. Already the worst part of her task was over, and if it had not been for an occasional misgiving, as she recalled the scene at Hazlewood, and the mesmeric trance into which she had been thrown, she would now have been perfectly happy. But she would ask herself: "Is it possible that I am legally that man's wife? Actually I will never be." And yet of what avail her resolve if she should come within the scope of his baleful power?

CHAPTER VIIL

INTERCEPTED.

MEANTIME Hazlewood was shut up once more. Lady Hazlewood had sailed in her brother's yacht to the Mediterranean. Kate's manner of escape had altogether baffled him, and he could not recover the trail. But his study of Sir John Hazlewood's will had shown him, that Count Sarda had once been on intimate terms with his English connections. Kate's money was to have gone to him had she died before attaining her majority. more likely than that she should have sought his protection? Had she gone straight to her end, it would not be possible to intercept her. But does a young woman ever go straight to her end? With plenty of money at her command, and two or three European capitals on her way, could she have hurried on without stopping? "No! I shall be in time," said the Baron, with a laugh.

The Baron's yacht, the Cossack, had been built, not many months before, on the built, not many months before, on the Clyde. No pains had been spared in her model or machinery to make her one of the fastest boats of the day. She had cost a large sum; but it was the intention of the Baron and his financial confederates to sell her for a much larger one to the Russian Government. When it was seen that she could steam round and round any of the fastest vessels of the Russian fleet,

the Government were sure to buy her. If not, Baron Hazlewood would be the master of the Black Sea, and not the Russians. There were two Scotch engineers on the yacht, but all the rest of the crew were foreign, and had joined the ship overland. The Baron hoped, so he confided to the ship's engineers, to beat the record on the run from off the Lizard to Constantinople. And the Cossack raced through the Mediterranean at full speed, only touching at Malta for a supply of coal, and to put ashore Lady Hazlewood and her companion, Bianca. And still at full speed the Cossack ran on, till she came to an anchor in the Golden Horn. At Constantinople the Baron went ashore. He had telegraphed from London to Odessa, to a firm with which he was connected, giving a description of Kate Hazlewood and her attendants, and asking for in-formation of their movements. Reports were to be sent by every fast steamer that passed Stamboul.

The Baron found several missives awaiting him. The first two or three contained merely regrets at not having any information to furnish. But the last arrived was more explicit. A member of the firm had just returned from Vienna, and reported that a young lady, as described, had attracted some attention at Vienna; that she had been making enquiries at the office of the Steamboat Company, and had, in fact, taken a passage for Odessa, down the Danube, and by rail, having secured berths and places, as was then necessary, a week in advance, for herself and suite.

"I shall have her now," the Baron said to himself, as he crushed up the dispatches in his fingers.

CHAPTER IX.

OVER THE BLACK SEA.

DARK clouds were scudding wildly over the sky, the sea was fretful with dark chopping waves that flung their foam hither and thither, and the general aspect of things justified the choice of its name as a happy one for the bad Black Sea. From the delights of Therapeia and the charms of the Bosphorus to plunge into the chilly rough-and-tumble of the Black Sea, is an unpleasant experience at any time. And the wind howled, and the sailors shivered and uttered cruel maledictions, while the Cossack, running dead against the wind, threw the waves aside with easy power.

Three hundred miles straight ahead over these churning waters; it was a pretty dance to lead a man, the Baron said to himself, shivering too, and Madame Kate should pay for it when he caught her. But in twenty-four hours land was sighted on the port bow; that was no doubt Cape Tarkhan, the most westerly point of the Crimea, and the course was altered a trifle to bear up for Odessa. A smart-looking steamer was heading in the same direction, and the Cossack, having the speed of her, soon overhauled her, and came up alongside. She proved to be the Yalta, Count Sarda's yacht, and also bound for Odessa. The Baron recognised the master of the yacht as an old acquaintance. He was a Greek, and had been employed by the Baron's associates, and was a good seaman, and generally faithful to his salt, but with an ear attuned to the tinkle of silver roubles. The Baron hailed him to come on board, and the pair were presently The Baron had in earnest conclave. ascertained the errand of the Yalta, which was, as he had guessed, to meet at Odessa and carry back to Aloupka a relative of the owner of the yacht. Well, the Baron had reasons for wishing to reach Odessa first. What harm would there be in the captain delaying his passage for twentyfour hours? Some slight accident to the machinery — anything would do for a pretext for lying-to for that space of time. The captain lent ear to the chink of a canvas bag full of silver coins. It was true that he was not in any great hurry; and if the Baron would report him as on the way, and detained by fouling his screw, there would be no harm done to anybody.

The Baron was satisfied, and so was Georges, the Captain of the Yalta. As soon as the Cossack had left the Yalta hull down on the horizon, the Baron called the master of the yacht. "It is time we ceased to carry that absurd name on our stern—Cossack! Who ever heard of a Cossack afloat? Have it painted out, and when the paint is dry, paint in Yalta; my friend, the Count, will not object." The master of the yacht showed his white teeth in an appreciative manner, and said it should be done. And the alteration was made without exciting any comment except between the two Scotch engineers.

"Man, I'm thinking we're going to sail under false colours!" said Sandy to Alec. And Alec looked grave and pulled his beard thoughtfully, but only replied with a

grunt.

Arrived within the roadstead in front of Odessa, the false Yalta anchored and signalled to the shore. Health officers and Custom House officers put forth, but when they came alongside, the master of the yacht, who had received his lesson, explained that he did not wish to come into port or to hold any communication with the shore; but that a lady passenger awaited him at Odessa, and that his master had authorised him to hire a steam-tug or tender to bring her and her belongings to the yacht, so as to avoid any detention in port. Another little bag of silver roubles made smooth the negotiations, and the Customs boat returned, an officer having promised to apprise the young lady and give notice to the master of the tender.

CHAPTER X.

A BAND OF DESPERADOES.

KATE HAZLEWOOD had reached Odessa early that morning, attended by her faithful There was nothing about the town to excite vivid interest. All was modern; there were long wide streets, low white houses, trees everywhere and falling leaves, droskies dashing here and there, soldiers and uniformed officials everywhere visible, with the cosmopolitan men of commerce, such as you might meet in Mincing Lane or Eastcheap, with a sprinkling of brown faces under turban or caftan. Down by the quays, to which Philip Brook found his way at once to enquire for the Yalta, all seemed English and familiar. Burly English Captains, Scotch engineers, tall Northumbrians, broader in their Scotch than Sandy himself, with a few sallow Americans, or swarthy Italians; these were the staple of the men to be met on the quays, or discovered in the numerous cafés and houses of entertainment adjoining.

Presently Philip was surrounded by a

knot of excited Levantines.

"You want a ship, Johnny! Me take you on board! Very good boat, sar!" But these retired to a respectful distance as the harbour-master, who wore a deeply embroidered uniform, and might have been an Admiral, walked majestically along.

The Yalta had just been signalled; she was not coming into harbour, a steamer would take out her expected guests to where she lay in the offing. The officials were courteous and yet obdurate. Passports must be examined, permits for embarkation made out; but Kate coming white jackets hurried her luggage on

upon the scene, quickened all the former processes with a few judicious douceurs. There were so many obstacles to their embarkation, that all their anxiety was to get on board. Everywhere along their route hitherto, there had been a certain nervous dread of interruption on Kate's The Baron, with his indefinite claims, might appear at any moment. But now she felt in complete safety. Once on board her uncle's yacht, and all danger

"Eh, they're a bad lot here, Miss Hazle-wood!" said a jolly voice at Kate's elbow. "Don't you trust 'em for a copper copeck."

The speaker was a bronzed and elderly tar, one Captain Grant, who was well known to Kate by sight. He was the owner and master of an old tub of a brig, the Saucy Bess, that traded a good deal in coals, but was not particular as to its cargo; and he was a man well known upon the staith at Whitby, while equally familiar with the Rialto of Venice. The Saucy Bess was at this moment lying at anchor in the roadstead with a cargo of wheat, and only waiting the Customs clearance, while a fair wind for home was blowing, and her Captain was fretting his heart out at the delay. When Kate's papers were ready, she spoke a word for her compatriot to the urbane chief.

The little harbour-tug, with Kate and her fortunes on board, was soon speeding across the stretch of muddy waters to where the false Yalta lay anchored. Even now her anchor was being lifted, and it was quite evident to a practised eye, that with the set of wind and current, the Yalta would foul the old north-country brig that lay close alongside, as soon as the former began to move. The crew of the brig were quite alive to this, and were pelting the yacht with lumps of coal and injurious words, but no response was made

from the false Yalta.

"There's a family likeness about these Russian yachts," said Philip, who had only had a glimpse of the veritable Cossack one night by moonlight; still, he had as good a memory for a ship as some people have for a face, and his suspicions might happily have been excited before it was too late, but he read the name on the stern, and was satisfied.

The Captain of the yacht in his best uniform advanced, cap in hand, to meet Kate Hazlewood as she sprang upon the deck of the yacht; half-a-dozen men in board; the tender was cast off; Kate was ushered into the principal cabin; while Philip and his mother remained on deck,

looking curiously about them.

Then the Captain gave a word of command. At that moment the long-expected collision came off, and the yacht and the brig were hugging each other, in a way that was much resented by the crew of the weaker vessel. But they were too much occupied in fending off the steamer, to continue their fusillade. Instantly twenty or thirty men rushed on the yacht's deck. Philip and his mother were roughly seized, quickly enveloped each in forty or fifty folds of cotton, and in that state, like mummies, handed over the yacht's side and deposited on the deck of the brig. Then the yachtsmen cut all clear with axe and knife, and the steamer shot away under full steam, with a howl from her steam-pipe, as it seemed, of savage derision. The brig, with bowsprit shattered, and rigging hacked, spun round slowly.

But the moment of collision had been long enough for two sturdy Scots to recognise each other—one on board the brig, the mate, generally known as Long Sam; and the other, an engineer of the yacht.

"Man Alec!" shouted the former.
"Man Sam!" echoed the other.

A pantomimic gesture towards the damaged rigging was sufficient explanation.

"Ye're aboard a pirate!" shouted Sam. Alec replied by extending his five fingers in a way that had its significance for Sam. For, hardly noticing the living cargo so unceremoniously thrust on board, the mate himself swarmed out to the end of the bowsprit, with the end of a tarred rope in his hand, and his knife between his teeth, to splice the broken spar, while through a spare corner of his mouth—it was a wide one—he shouted commands to the crew to lift the anchor, and loosen all sails.

Captain Grant soon after came on board with his papers all right, but purple with anger at the sight of his damaged rigging. By this time Philip had released himself and his mother from bondage, and was able to explain what had happened.

"What, have they run off with the bonnie leddie?" cried the Captain. "Oh!

what will we do ?"

"Chase the villains!" cried the mate, who had spliced the bowsprit with wonderful expedition, and was now repairing the running rigging.

Captain Grant lifted his arms with a

gesture of despair.

"Are ye a reasonable creature, Sam?" he cried; "yon boat is running twenty knots an hour."

"Cap'n," said Sam, with a strange contortion of the features, "I've got a friend

aboord."

And yet the chase seemed a hopeless one. Half an hour only since the collision had elapsed before the Saucy Bess was under sail, and yet the steamer was only visible as a patch of smoke on the horizon. With the wind full abaft, and every sail drawing, the Saucy Bess might run her ten knots an hour. But then Mother Elspeth atood in the bows of the pursuing ship, her hands raised, invoking curses on the "fated and perfidious barque" that was disappearing in the distance, and beckoning on the wind to fill the sails as the brig flew through the waters.

Indeed, the sailors worked with double zest, and thought themselves sure of a prosperous voyage as they recognised Mother Elspeth's presence—a woman well known for hereditary power over winds and waves. And it seemed to those on board as if, indeed, something miraculous attended her prayers and imprecations. For, instead of disappearing altogether, the patch of smoke grew more distinct; masts became visible, and then the hull of the steamer. The Saucy Bess was gaining fast upon the fastest steamer yet

launched upon the Clyde.

Then it was seen that the pillar of smoke from the steamer's funnel was succeeded by a column of white steam.

"Her engines have broken down!" shouted Captain Grant, in delight. "We've

got her now!"

For the beautiful ship, but just now the monarch of the seas, lay as helpless as a log upon the waves, at the mercy of the veriest tub that floated and had power to sail.

Captain Grant called up all hands and addressed them in a short but stirring speech:

"Men, we're going to fecht.

fules can go down below."

But the crew of the brig were staunch,

and no waverers were found to seek ignominious safety.

Meantime, how went it on board the

yacht ?

When Kate was ushered into the handsomely decorated salon of the yacht, she sank into a fauteuil with a feeling of delightful restfulness. There were English newspapers and magazines on the table.

What! Did they take the Times at Aloupka? Then she looked up and saw the Baron standing before her. He came to her with the same air of overpowering force, as on that dreadful day. But to her great joy, Kate found that his magnetic power had now no effect upon her. She held her casket firmly clasped in her arms. Nothing should ever part her from that. But how did he come here ?

"Have you cheated my uncle, too ?" she asked, disdainfully. "Have you lied and forged your way into his confidence?"

"We are here chez nous, my dear Kate," said the Baron, changing his serious attitude to one mocking and sarcastic. "You are on board your husband's yacht, no longer the Cossack; but what matters? You shall choose a name to please yourself."

"And Philip, and Mother Elspeth ?" cried Kate, with a shudder of horror.

"I have dismissed them. They will find their way back. What matters for those canaille? Here we are together, we will commence that honeymoon which was so cruelly interrupted."

Kate, still carrying her casket, walked past the Baron, and ascended the companion ladder. She thought of throwing herself into the sea, if they were not too far from land, but the sight of the wide sea horizon, and of the seaport shining white in the distance, and so far distant, made her recoil.

"All this yacht is at your disposal, my dear Kate," pursued the Baron, who had followed her to the deck. "Its owner, its sailing master, its devoted crew. These are the men who were witnesses of our marriage. You remember hearing their cheers as the benediction was pronounced. Now they shall cheer again for your arriva

At a signal the crew gathered together in a picturesque group. At another signal they raised a strange, shrill cry, that represented a shout of joy. Kate remembered the sound perfectly; she had heard it when escaping from Haz!swood in Mother Elspeth's arms.

"Thank Heaven," said Kate, "I am not your wife. It was not for me those wed-

ding cheers were raised."

"But under the circumstances," replied the Baron, "I should think you would not desire to disown your marriage. Here I have every proof that may enable me to combat your delusion. The certificate of your worthy pastor Sholto Carr, the attestation of your good trustee the Admiral, with others."

"I had rather be the victim, than the wife of such a scoundrel,"

"Well, then, we must alter our treatment," said the Baron, fiercely. "You are insensible to kindness, authority must take its place. You have a case there, a casket; give it to me."

Kate did not deign a reply, but clasped

the casket closer in her arms.

Just then there ran a perceptible thrill through the ship, and there was a rush of engineers and stokers to the deck, followed by a gush of steam from the stoke-hole. The screw ceased to revolve, while through the escape-pipe rushed the full pressure of white steam. Alec appeared last of all with an air of conscious pride.

"Man Baron," said Alec, "I've saved your boat by turning off the steam at the risk of my life. The main shaft's gone."

The Baron stamped and swore. "How long will it take to repair it?" "I may make some kind of a job of it in

four-and-twenty hours." "Ah, well!" cried the Baron, turning to "In such society, four-and-twenty Kate.

hours will pass like one.

But he had not reckoned for the pursuing brig which presently came in sight, full sail crowded upon her, presenting a beautiful and even majestic sight, for under such circumstances the meanest collier brig is grander to see than the biggest ship in the world under steam.

"'Tis the brig we collided with just

now," remarked Alec, innocently.
"What do you want?" roared the Baron, as the brig came within hail. "You'll be aboard of us directly."

"I mean to," replied Captain Grant. " First we want compensation damages."

"Granted," said the Baron. "Twenty pounds, as much as your tub is worth."

"Then we want the leddie," replied Grant with still more emphasis, leddie you've took from her friends."

"Pish!" cried the Baron.

"Then if you won't, we'll sink you," roared Grant.

The brig, admirably handled by Long Sam at the wheel, was bearing full upon the side of the helpless steamer; which, assuredly, she would crack like a nut. Heaven knows what would have been the result to the brig; Captain Grant did not; but he trusted in Providence, and in the Sibyl at the prow, who denounced vengeance on the false loons in the yacht.

But the fifty men who formed the crew

of the false Yalta, seeing sudden destruction coming upon them, raised a yell and, as one man, rushed aft, seized the Baron, and hurried him from the deck, while they energetically waved a full surrender. Round came the brig into the wind, just shaving the steamer's quarter, and Kate, with a cry of joy, leapt from the deck into the arms of her foster-brother Philip.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRIMEA.

WHEN the Saucy Bess lost sight of the Baron's yacht, it appeared that the engineers had succeeded in repairing the main shaft; for she was last seen steaming along at reduced speed towards the south. brig bore up towards Odessa, a long beat to windward, but happily the true Yalta made her appearance soon after-her Captain in a terrible fright lest his treachery should be discovered-and Kate Hazlewood and her friends were taken on board. All her baggage had been flurg aboard the brig; the desperadoes being only too glad to get rid of everything that might be evidence against them, as to this "coup manqué." Captain Grant was warmly thanked, his crew rewarded, and the vessels parted, amid hearty cheers from the British crew.

With her head pointed south-west the yacht soon came in sight of the Crimean coast; the low, sandy desert country first of all, with Eupatoria-in the great bight that was almost filled once upon a time by the immense fleet, transports, and men-ofwar, steamers, and mighty sailing battleships, which transported the allied armies to the destined scene of conflict. Then the ground rose in precipitous heights, broken by the ravines of the river Alma, and Belbec. Higher rose the heights, and more steeply scarped were the cliffs, till Sebastopol came into view with its noble estuary, and the remains of its forts, and moles, and half-ruined streets, all in shining white limestone. Then followed the sight of the iron-bound coast, where the dark sea, deeper than plummet could sound, broke against the mighty wall of rock. Cape Chersonese, with the white walls of a convent visible upon its lofty summit, seemed to bar the passage along the unhospitable coast, but Kamiesh Bay, snugly lying beneath, was pointed out as the base of supply of the great host of Frenchmen, whose tents once whitened

the plateau far and near. A mere rift in the jagged and terrible precipices was the entrance to Balaclava harbour. Here were the frightful rocks on which the Prince went to pieces on the night of the terrible storm. But by degrees the scarped cliffs are succeeded by charming slopes, and lovely groves; the hills recede into the background, and between their purple summits and the sea, which itself seems to assume a brighter colour and more gracious aspect, there stretches a tract of country of the utmost luxuriance and beauty. A line of splendid villas occupy every point of vantage, whose gardens bloom with every variety of sub-tropical plants, while marble terraces, statues, temples, fountains, gleam from out of the verdure. A pearl, indeed, in the Æthiop's ear is this strip of Paradise, surrounded by the bad, Black

The yacht dropped her anchor in the roadstead of Yalta, the place from which she took her name. A crew in the smart uniform of the yacht took the travellers ashore. A carriage was awaiting them as they landed in the midst of a little marketplace, set out with the richest of autumn fruit and flowers. And what a mingled crowd it was through which the carriage slowly made its way! For it was the hour when everybody, rich and poor, prince and peasant, were found on the promenade. The Tartar chief in pelisse and caftan, his compatriot, a beggar, in picturesque rags, a bevy of maidens of the same race, with roguish almond-shaped eyes; Russian uniforms by the score; officers' wives in Parisian costumes; lines of droskies and private carriages; all and everybody rubbing shoulders with the most friendly equality beneath the arching shade of avenues of chestnut, lime, and acacia. was a scene almost startling in its life, movement, and grace.

But once out of the press the coachman started his horses at a gallop, and up hill and down dale the vehicle went at a pace, till passing under an avenue of beech, and through a thicket of scented and flowering shrubs, the vehicle drew up before the verandah of the Villa Sarda, a far stretching building of only one storey, with white walls and a green glittering roof, studded with domes and minarets—all very grace-

ful and bizarre.

The whole family had assembled to welcome the new arrival. The venerable grandmother who received her granddaughter with the dignity of the ancient

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school, and then wept as she recalled the features of her sainted Catherine, reproduced in their English guise; the Countess, brisk and pleasant; her husband, good-tempered and lazy; a small group of daughters, inquisitive and critical; a son in a smart undress uniform, with a background of guests of all kinds, but chiefly military. It was bewildering enough to Kate, after a somewhat lonely youth, to be suddenly transplanted into such a family life.

CHAPTER XIL

BATTLE-FIELDS OF THE CRIMEA.

GAY enough was the time that followed Kate's first introduction to her mother's Were there not balls, parties, entertainments of all kinds? Were not the Russian officers accomplished waltzers? Was there a night that passed unoccupied by music and the dance? Kate had innumerable admirers: a Prince with fortune of millions; another with only his word, but the handsomest man bravest officer in the Russian army; halfa-dozen more of various degrees of eligibility were more or less infatuated for the charming English girl. Kate was known as the heiress to a considerable English estate; but it was also understood that if she married a Russian subject she would inherit her share of her grandmother's fortune, and the old Countess was reputed as fabulously rich. But Kate remained untouched by the attentions she received.

Expeditions, too, were made before winter came on, by Kate and her friends, to all the points of interest in the neighbourhood. From the heights above Balaclava they looked down upon the valley that witnessed the charge of the "Six Hundred;" they traced the course of the railway that supplied the English camp. There was the plateau once covered with the tents of the invaders; there the ravine of Inkermann up which rushed the overpowering tide of Russian soldiery there the site of the battery that first checked their advance; the old windmill on the hill; the white sparkling quarries, where a whole hill-side was cut away; the caverns; the aqueduct; and, beyond, the arm of the sea that meets the pleasant valley of the Tchernaya river. Then there were the graveyards — the hill, with its broken walls and shattered monuments. But there were certain tombs that had been carefully tended, and Kate gathered manner one day.

a handful of charming wild flowers that grew upon the graves of the brave men of old.

But the most enduring memento that the British army left of its hostile presence was the acres of broken beer-bottles that surrounded the site of their encampments. Thirsty souls were these paladins of ours, and corkscrews were unknown in the British camp. To knock the head off a bottle, to pour the contents down his throat, and smash the bottle on the ground, such was the delight of Tommy Atkins in those distant days, and thus he has left his imperishable mark.

Then there were the mighty works of Todleben, for the defence; the Malakhoff, now a beer-garden; the Redan, a portion of the same public promenade; quiet burghers strolling up and down, arm-in-arm, with fierce Cossack warriors; and a band playing upon the site that was drenched with human blood.

Sebastopol was no longer a ruin, a railway had brought life to its grass-grown quays. A depôt occupied the place of an old redoubt—droskies rattle through the streets and raise the white dust in clouds. Sometimes a steamer puffs noisily into the noble harbour, and wakes the echoes from broken forts and demolished batteries.

Then there was a famous picnic to Bakhtchi Serai, the old Tartar capital, with its Palace of the old Khans, penetrated with a soft melancholy feeling; marble pavements, arabesques, fountains, whispering trees, and murmuring waters, all telling the same sad story. And the bazaar -for a bit of Eastern life commend us to the bazaar of that Crim Tartar town. Turbans, caftans, fur - caps, rough shock heads, mingling about the stalls; artisans at work in the background - tinmen, saddlers, bakers, smiths, with the noises of their work, and the general rattle of voices; veiled women flit about-lovely Jewesser, the daughters of those solemn long-bearded rabbin.

At night the picnickers slept at the hotel; they are kabobs of mutton on skewers; they tasted the famous sweetmeats of the Karaites. And what a gallop back they had over steppes, coming every now and then to fertile valleys and streams of living water!

Among all these distractions had Kate forgotten that there was a serious purpose before her? That was the question that Mother Elspeth put to her in an impressive manner one day. Dame Elspeth had

employed her time in wandering about, making friends in Tartar huts, and among Greeks and Jews, and charming everybody by her mysterious gifts. At the Villa she was in great demand. She told fortunes by cards, by the ancient arts of palmistry. The whole division of the army then in camp-horse, foot, and artillery-sent its officers to learn their fate from the old lady. But she was getting tired of it all, and she longed to see her old cottage on the moors, and to feel the keen winds of the North, and taste the brine from its Philip, it must be said, had gone home long ago. Once Kate was safe among her own people, Philip's occupation was gone, and he was impatient to be at sea again. If he could not get restored to his old rating in the navy, he would get employment in the merchant service. Indeed, he picked up the Saucy Bess at Constantinople, where she had been detained, and travelled home very comfortably in the society of Captain Grant and Long Sam. Not a penny would the hospitable Captain receive for the passage; and as Philip had been handsomely rewarded by Kate for his services, he landed at home tolerably well provided for, and able to look about him.

Somewhat startling news had reached Kate about home affairs. Lady Hazlewood had written to her from Brighton. was married; had been married, indeed, for some months to her dear French artist, and now, circumstances imperatively demanded the avowal. This event would make Kate the owner of Hazlewood; but Lady Hazlewood, or, as she now announced herself, Lady Hazlewood Deschamps, threw herself on the mercy of Kate. been a cruel provision of Sir John's to cut her off from any future union, and surely Kate would not leave her to exist upon what her dear husband might earn by coining, as it were, his heart's blood into ducats.

Kate replied in a kind and generous way. Whatever Hazlewood brought in, her stepmother should take half of it. But here she was met by a very awkward manœuvre on the part of Baron Hazlewood. He claimed to administer the estate on his wife's behalf. All the tenants had received notice to pay their rents to him and nobody else.

News came of Ronald too. The Admiral was dead, and he had left Carrholme to his nephew. His will was dated on the day following Ronald's rencontre with the

Baron at Whitby, and Ronald had a shrewd notion that the pugnacious Admiral must have had a purpose in the bequest. Ronald himself was uneasy and unhappy. He had been cheated and insulted by Baron Hazlewood, and he could settle to nothing till he had cleared the matter up. Ronald had resigned his command, and was now on half-pay, and roaming restlessly up and down the surface of the earth looking for the Baron.

All this made Kate unhappy in her turn. Her life was poisoned by the continued influence of this man. He would probably meet Ronald in a duel and kill him, for the Baron was skilful in all the weapons of the duello. And, if Ronald were the survivor, she could never marry him—to "kill and take possession" would be a revolting end to their story.

It was in this darkened frame of mind that Dame Elspeth found her foster-child when she put the momentous question:

"Have you forgotten?"

No, she had not forgotten; but still she had been slack about the matter. Ah! she had found out the little chapel; she had visited it more than once. The chapel had been kept in repair, but it had not been used for worship since its altar had been desecrated by bloodshed. The people of the neighbourhood still talked about that terrible deed. Sometimes a priest would come from the convent, would dust and arrange the ornaments, and he would lower the brazen hook from which had once hung the sacred lamp, would polish it and restore it to its position, open doors and windows. But when the priest went away he took the key with him. And here was the difficulty, not a very serious one in appearance, and yet it had baffled Katerepeatedly. To apply for the key would excite some curiosity; the restoration of the lamp would be a nine days' wonder, and not for worlds would she have given a clue to the knowledge that her father had done the guilty sacrilegious deed.

The winter had passed, there had been no frost or snow in the southern part of the Peninsula. On the other side of the hills there had been icy winds and cruel frosts; but here the climate was always mild, and the tropical verdure of summer was preserved in the very lap of winter. Perhaps when the spring came the northern regions had their compensation, for then the steppes were covered with the freshest green and carpeted with fragrant wild flowers; the forest trees were bursting into

leaf; orchards were white with blossom; and the little Tartar farmhouses, with clumps of tall poplars rising above them, were embowered in shrubs and flowers.

Especially lovely was the spring-time in the little valley of the chapel; the woods resounded with the songs of birds; the paths were festooned with creepers, and carpeted with the most delicate ferns. the midst of all this flood of renewed life, the chapel stood, cold, lifeless, deserted. Kate passed the place one evening with a joyous party on horseback. Some crossed themselves, others shrugged their shoulders and smiled; it was a point of delicacy among the party of the villa not to mention the incident of the sacrilege before an English woman. Kate turned her horse, dismounted, and looked in. venerable priest with a white beard was looking sorrowfully about him. The key was in the lock and Kate drew it out softly and threw it into the long grass, and then rode on and joined her companions.

Early morning was Kate's opportunity, for at any other time of the day it was difficult to evade companionship. She rose at daybreak, dressed herself in white, and with trembling hands drew the lamp, now glittering with jewels, from its casket and concealed it in the folds of her dress. The house was buried in sleep as she passed The sun rose on her way and turned the dewdrops at her feet into diamonds, and the massive summit of the mountains glowed like gold. Not a soul was to be seen in the wood; the chapel was in the midst of a peaceful solitude. The door was unlocked and secured only by a morsel of bent wire. Kate entered breathless. Daylight had scarcely penetrated the narrow windows. With quick, noiseless steps, she passed to the sanctuary, drew down the brazen hook, affixed the golden chains.

The lamp was swinging on high, and as it swung a ray of sunlight, through some narrow aperture in the eastern gable, fell upon the lamp and lighted up its jewelled rim, darting luminous sparkles and coruscetions of light all around. And then occurred a marvellous thing which is hardly capable of explanation. The lamp was alight! a feeble flame glowed upon the wick,

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Kate sank back into a recessed seat, and knelt there full of awe and wonder, not unmixed with reverent gratitude. The unmixed with reverent gratitude. The offering had been accepted; the sacrilege was expiated; her father's sin was for-

and the venerable priest, whom she had seen the night before, entered the chapel. He did not see her, his eyes were riveted upon the lamp. He folded his hands, he threw himself upon his knees at the gate of the sanctuary. "It burns still," he cried, "but it burns low," and turning to a little arched recess he drew forth a vessel of oil, replenished and trimmed the lamp, and again knelt down. Kate now rose and tried to pass out unobserved, But the priest turned his head. She was discovered.

"It is the blessed Saint Catherine who has restored the precious relic," murmured the priest, bending low, and covering his face with the sleeves of his robe. "And why am I chosen to be the witness of this glory? Because I was the only witness to the sacrilege. Behold the wound that thy servant received in defending thy precious lamp, from the sword of the unbelieving invader. Let it be a crown of glory for me in Paradise!"

The gesture, the words which she could well comprehend, brought conviction into the mind of Kate. This was the priest whom her father had struck down. There was no blood-guiltiness upon him. She glided silently away, and when the priest raised his head he was alone.

Some days after, Kate made a visit to the convent to which the old priest belonged. She was anxious to see if anything could be done to make his latter days more comfortable. The old man "His latter hours had been was dead. brightened," explained the superior, "by a wondrous vision of Saint Catherine; a vision corroborated by the miraculous replacement of a lamp in the chapel of the saint, which had been stolen during the invasion of the Crimea. During his life the old man had been held in much honour on account of a wound received in defence of the altar.'

"But I have been told," said Kate, "that the priest was killed."

The superior smiled quietly. " There was a pious fiction to that effect, which strengthened the courage of our soldiers against the invaders. But the truth can now be told."

CHAPTER XIII.

LIFE OR DEATH.

WITH wealth, a fine career before him, and the world, so to say, at his feet, As she knelt the door was slowly opened, Ronald Carr was unhappy. Baron Hazlewood weighed upon him. That man had ruined his life, cheated him out of the only blessing he really coveted — his bonnie Kate. If the Baron had himself gained little by the transaction hitherto, he had, at all events, effectually prevented Ronald from attaining his heart's desire. And then, his overbearing insolence had left in Ronald's mind a feeling that he could not worthily hold up his head as a Carr of Carrholme—for they had been a fire-eating, fighting line — unless he vindicated his honour. It might be a foolish, uncivilised, unchristian notion; but there it was, and made inaction unendurable.

Several times Ronald had reminded the Baron that he was waiting to hear from him. He had received no answer.

The Baron was a migratory being. had stayed for a single night at Hazlewood, just to assert his right. He had frightened the old servants out of their wits, and then had disappeared. He was next heard of at Brighton, where he had a stormy interview with his sister and her husband. The young Frenchman was brave and hightempered, and would have adjourned the discussion to the sands of the opposite coast, with either swords or pistols; but the Baron laughed him to scorn and departed. Then he was known to be at Constantinople, engaged in some financial intrigue. The last accounts were that he was buying horses and mules in Asia Minor, presumably for the Russian Government. He had sold his yacht to the Czar, for she had proved the fastest boat in the Black Sea, and was to be utilised as a despatch-boat and light cruiser. He was, indeed, in high favour with the Russian administration, and, at his request, a mutiny that had recently broken out in his yacht, had been punished by sending half-a-dozen of the offenders to the mines. It would be no easy matter to bring him to account; but Ronald determined to try.

Ronald had experienced enough heat and discomfort from engines and boilers in the navy. He bought a fast-sailing schooner yacht, the Dream, and put Philip²Brook in command of her. He intended to navigate her himself, and Philip was a practical seaman, who might be trusted in other

matters.

The Dream had a prosperous voyage through the Mediterranean, and to Constantinople. There Ronald had news of the Baron. He had gone to the eastern shores of the Sea of Azof—a desolate, thinly-peopled region, whence there had

come recent reports of the discovery of oil wells that would put those of the Caspian into the shade. Here, too, Philip had letters from his mother. She was thankful to say that Miss Kate was about to start for home, and that she would soon see her native moors again. The Count would accompany his niece to Constantinople in his vacht, and would then place her on board an English steamer. Miss Kate was going to take possession of Hazlewood, and meant to hold it against all comers. Count, who had been told the whole story, would have gone with her and backed her up, but he could not get permission to

travel beyond Stamboul.

Well, the two yachts were hardly likely to meet, for the Dream was to skirt the Asiatic and Circassian coasts for the sake of scenery and sport. That, at least, was the original intention, but Ronald grew impatient of delay, and the wind coming fair off Sinope, the Dream's course was changed for the Straits of Yenikale. Ronald was a careful navigator; he had made a good observation at noon. But he must have made a mistake somewhere, for as he neared the coast he found that the lights were, according to his reckoning, all wrong. The twin lights that showed the entrance to the straits, which should have been directly ahead, showed far away on his larboard quarter, and being in doubt as to his position, he very wisely anchored, and made all snug for the night.

Presently, a steamer's lights were made out in the distance, coming from the Crimean coast. She was not making for the straits, apparently, but for the Circassian coast. The night was rather thick, and as the steamer passed close by, they saw nothing more of her except her lights. Then after some hours an extraordinary thing happened. Suddenly the lights came all right again, as if somebody had given the Black Sea a shake round. There were the lights of the straits just as Ronald had expected to find them, and other lights in their due order according to the charts, while those previously seen had been extinguished.

"There is some devilish work going on to-night, sir, I expect," said Brook to his commander. "I've heard of such things,

but I never expected to see 'em."
"What do you make of them?" asked
Ronald.

"False lights," said Brook. "Wrecking business; hung out for yonder steamer, I expect." r

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If that were the case, the steamer was now past praying for. She must have gone ashore by this time on the barren unhospitable coast—a sort of no man's land, almost uninhabited and entirely desolate. All on board the yacht listened and

watched for signals of distress.

But nothing could be heard. As the night wore on the wind rose, and heavy waves came sweeping in before the gale, but anchors and tackle withstood the strain and the yacht rode out the gale in safety. Daylight appeared, and the various points of the coast came into sight, as the sun began to gild the foaming crests of the waves. A good way off could be made out the masts and funnels of a steamer apparently some distance in shore. of the yacht's boats was lowered, and Ronald set forth to investigate the fate of the steamer. As the boat proceeded the mouth of a wild lagoon opened out, and within the lagoon could be seen the steamer fairly aground, but apparently not injured. By great good fortune she had struck the mouth of the lagoon on the previous night, and had thus escaped shipwreck on the rocky shore. Rowing into the lagoon, Ronald hailed the steamer. She was the Yalta; Count Sarda's yacht. And where were the passengers ?

Nothing could be definitely made out from the men on board; but it was evident that they had landed, and probably had made their way to the nearest post station. Ronald landed on the sandy shore of the lagoon and walked on in the direction pointed out by the crew of the yacht. Far into the distance stretched a flat, open country, across which ran a narrow postroad bordered by a line of telegraph poles. The country was not wholly barren; horses and herds of cattle could be seen feeding in the distance. A helpless feeling came over Ronald, alone and on foot in the

midst of a boundless plain.

Then Ronald beheld a cloud of dust rising in the distance, and presently a body of horsemen, at full gallop, came into view, showing bright sparkles of light here and there in their dense mass. It was a squadron of irregular cavalry, and as they came in sight of the yacht stranded there upon the plain, the leader of the party halted them, and entered into parley with the crew. Then the cavalry advanced at a more leisurely pace, while the leader and another galloped forward at full speed. The cavalry chief was a noble-looking fellow in a dashing uniform. His com-

panion was also a handsome fellow, but looked evil enough to Ronald, who recognised him at once as Baron Hazlewood.

Ronald stepped forward, and stood in the track as he waved to the pair to stop. They reined up and the Russian officer, saluting politely, while the Baron eyed him with a cold indifferent glance, inquired Ronald explained the other's business. that he was a naval officer, and had just landed from his yacht. That he had left England and traversed the Mediterranean and Black Sea, for no other purpose than to meet the Baron, between whom and himself words had been exchanged and injuries given, that nothing could atone for. The officer turned to his companion, who nodded an emphatic assent to this statement.

"We are on special service," said the cavalryman. "But everything must give place to an affair of this kind. The opportunity that offers may never be renewed. Let me consult my brother

officer."

The chief rode back to where the rest of the party had halted again, and presently the chief and his subordinate came on, dismounted, and beckoned to Ronald.

"You are quite sure you wish to fight him?" asked the chief. "I don't think you need. He is not quite——" shrugging his shoulders. "In fact, what you call 'ceuf pourri,' eh, bad egg, is it not? Here is this man, he has laid information against Count Sarda, our friend whom we all love. We hoped that he would have escaped and the charming demoiselle who accompanies him; but by what devilry he has trapped our friend, I know not."

"All the more I desire to meet him,"

said Ronald, grinding his teeth.

The officers bowed low and withdrew to consult. Presently they summoned the combatants to the conference.

"We desire to equalise the combat—you are a good swordsman," turning to the Baron, who bowed assent. "And you?"
"It is not my waspon" replied

"It is not my weapon," replied

Ronald.

"Probably you are both good pistol shots ?"

The Baron evidently preferred the sword, and Ronald modestly disclaimed any special skill, although with his own revolver he

could make good practice.

Then the Cossack chief announced the terms of the combat. A semicircular arc would be marked out on the steppe. On the chord of the arc Mr. Carr would take

his place, with his revolver. At some p int of the circumference, the Baron, on norseback, would take his place, armed with sword and loaded cavalry carbine, but with no other amm mition. Confined within the limits marked out, the combat would continue at the will of the combatants; but if at any time one held up his hand in token of defeat, the combat must cease.

The ground was marked out, a semicircle with a radius of about a hundred yards. Ronald and the Baron took their stations exactly opposite each other, Ronald in the centre of the chord, and the Baron in the centre of the arc. The Cossack troop drew round at a respectful distance, while the officers as the seconds of the combatants posted themselves at either end of the line, sharing the danger of a stray shot—a danger they politely ignored. The signal to begin was given as the combatants stood like statues watching each other narrowly. The Baron's tactics would be, his opponent judged, to take a deliberate shot with the carbine, and if that failed, to charge straight upon his adversary, who might easily miss a rapidly advancing foe even with the five barrels of his revolver. But if such were his purpose, he did not appear to be in haste to carry it out. rode round the circumference of the halfcircle slowly, as if to make sure of his ground, with carbine at the present, and naked sabre hanging from his wrist. hundred yards the best revolver makes but uncertain practice, and Ronald reserved his fire; but he advanced step by step nearer to the middle of the area, keeping a wary eye upon his antagonist. Ah, now he came! wheeling his horse suddenly at the extremity of the boundary, the Baron dashed at full speed at his enemy, flinging the carbine contemptuously high into the air, and charging straight at Ronald, whirling his flashing sabre over his head.

A guttural exclamation of admiration and delight burst from the assembled Cossacks. Three little puffs of white smoke issued from Ronald's pistol, but still the horseman rode on. At the fourth puff horse and rider rolled upon the field together. But the Baron sprang to his feet in a moment, unhurt, his sabre still in his hand, and dashed forward. The combat was still equal-let Ronald miss but that shot, and all was over with him.

But Ronald's last shot told; the Baron fell on his knee, struggled to his feet again, the ground, fell once more prone upon the earth.

"He can fight no more," said the Cossack chief, walking up to the Baron's prostrate form. "You, noble sir, hasten to rejoin your ship. The civil authorities will perhaps give you trouble. He was a great rascal, I believe, but the Government favour him. Hasten. Adieu."

Meantime, Philip Brook, alarmed at the long absence of his chief, had taken a boat and landed too, but at a point of the coast a little lower down, for he had caught sight of the Cossack lances, and thought it prudent to reconnoitre them from a distance. As Philip approached the head of the lagoon, he heard his name distinctly pronounced in a low voice. Close by, was a hut half sunk in the ground, and covered with turf.

"Yes, it is really Philip," said the voice in a louder key; and next moment Kate Hazlewood held him by the hand, and his mother fell upon his neck and kissed him. There was a pleasant-looking, elderly gentleman, too, who turned out to be the Count Sarda. The boat was close at hand, and Philip, explaining rapidly how it was the Dream had come into these waters, hurried them on board, and then went to search for Ronald. He heard shots, and ran forward to meet Ronald presently, stalking moodily towards his boat. Even when apprised of the happy chance that had brought Kate and her companions safely on board the Dream, his face hardly brightened.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE DARDANELLES.

THERE was plenty of wind, and the Dream walked through the waters like a thing of life. Ere she was clear of the coast some attempt was made to detain her: a boat was launched from a quarantine station, a battery fired a shot across her bows; but when she was fairly under sail she left all the trouble behind her, and soon was out of sight of land and careering along with her head pointing for the Bosphorus. After awhile, on their right, they caught sight of the peaks of the Crimean mountains just showing above the horizon, and a few white sails showed here and there; but these soon disappeared, and the Dream was alone on the waters.

"Now that I am in for it," said the and then, striving to cut his opponent to Count gaily, as he smoked his cigarette under the lee of the companion hatchway, "I shall make the voyage with you."

He had no fears on his own account; he had never conspired; he was too lazy and good - tempered for a conspirator, and he did not doubt soon making his peace with the Czar. But if Kate were detained, she would certainly be handed over to the Baron, who would show a good title to her as his wife. Ronald forbore to explain that the Baron was out of the way of making such a claim. He had not even told Philip Brook, and he dared not make contion to Kate. Now that he no longer saw things in a red, lurid light, he shuddered to think that he had joined in such a barbarous combat. Surely he was a more wicked man than the one he had slain; more barbarous than the wildest Cossack who had cheered on the contest. In fact, conscience troubled him most fiercely.

Kate saw the change in him, and wondered what it meant. Ronald occupied himself over his charts; he was always on deck watching the sails, studying the compass, busy with his sextants and strange-looking brass instruments. No incident marked the run; there was nothing in sight but sea and sky till the Dream was within sixty miles of the Bosphorus. Then, on the horizon behind her, appeared the smoke of a steamer.

The Dream was racing at her topmost speed; but still the distant smoke remained in sight and became more distinctly marked; and then a steamer could be made out that was fast overhauling the yacht. Only one steamer on that sea could perform such a feat, and that was the despatch-boat which the Government had bought from Baron Hazlewood, now named the Ukraine. Dame Elspeth came forth uttering spells, and shook her fist at the approaching

Ronald to himself, and he watched its approach with the feeling of one foredoomed. The wind fell, the Dream was almost becalmed, her great sails flapped idly to and fro; and the steamer was coming up hand over hand. Then the sails were taken aback; the wind had chopped round into the south-west, almost directly opposite to the yacht's course. But the wind brought with it a thick white mist, which came rolling over the waters in dense curling masses. The Dream, her sails

trimmed and sheeted home till they were stiff as boards, shot forward once more. The speed of the mist and the speed of the yacht together were too great for the pursuing steamer. She fired a shot, but it fell wide of the mark, and then a great white curtain was spread over the whole scene. The steamer slowed, and began to hoot dismally the tidings that she was bewildered in the fog. The yacht stole softly

on unseen, unheard.

After sailing some hours, the Dream shot suddenly out of the mist into the rosy sunshine of a lovely summer's even-Bold headlands were on either hand, and beyond them a beautiful shore, a mass of verdure, among which gleamed white villas, kiosks, minarets, and towers. The yacht had passed within the Bosphorus, whose blue waters, smooth as glass, reflected every feature of the lovely sceneskiffs, and boats, frail caiques, and fairy pleasure-yachts shot to and fro in every direction. And soon appeared the thousand glittering pinnacles of the lovely queen of the east: seraglios, palaces, mosques, aligned above the curving shore, while in clusters upon the purple waters hung ships of every kind from every clime, masts and rigging showing in dainty tracery against the opal sky. There was Scutari, too, over the way, with its great white barracks, and green cemeteries, quiet and gloomy in the dying sunset. The report of a gun thunders over the waters; the muezzin calls to prayer from the lofty minaret; a sweet, short twilight descends; and myriads of lights sparkle forth into the perfumed night, and twinkle in the calm waters.

There was still a risk that the Dream might be detained at Constantinople, and she passed on and crossed the Sea of Marmora, where all was chilly and grey, with mist and rain. The sun was high in the heavens when the yacht passed between the solemn walls of rock, where the current runs strongly, carrying a mass of chilly water into the bright Ægean Sea. As they passed between the forts of Europe and Asia, a signal was made to stop the yacht; a boat was put out from the shore, filled with men in uniform. But the yacht continued her course, and when the boat's crew tried to hang on, the sailors cast her off. A blank shot was fired from the fort, and as the yacht took no notice, a shotted gun, the ball from which skipped across the water just in front. . The yacht slipped along so fast, however, that she was soon out of range. As there was a good deal of shipping in the straits, the Turks were probably afraid of sinking some innocent

A few hours later the Dream was cruising among the Isles of Greece.

CHAPTER XV.

DANGER AT MALTA.

THE voyage of the Dream through the Mediterranean had not proved eventful up to the time that she arrived at Malta, and took up a berth in the outer harbour. The weather had been chilly and, at times, squally, and even Malta proved comfortably cool. The Count wore a great-coat when he went ashore, and grumbled about the cold. Not for worlds would he cross the Bay of Biscay in such weather. He would take his niece home by way of Marseilles and Paris, especially Paris. He returned with the zest of a schoolboy at holiday time to his dear Paris.

As for Dame Elspeth, she preferred to stick to the ship. Kate had picked up a French maid at Malta, and could get on very well without her. And the dame was very comfortable on board the yacht; she had her son with her, she was very useful on board and highly popular with the sailors, who were mostly from the north country, and who had faith that they would never want a fair wind as long as the good dame sailed with them.

The yacht required some refitting, and she went into dock to be thoroughly overhauled. Ronald found plenty of friends among the naval and military people on the island. In his reckless and despondent mood he took to high play as a diversion, and, caring little whether he won or lost, he was generally very lucky. Among those who frequented the club, where Ronald was in the habit of playing, was a young Vicomte belonging to an ancient Maltese family, whose ill-luck was as notable as Ronald's successful play. And whether it was from pique or some deeper motive Ronald could not tell, but this youth sought every opportunity of forcing a quarrel upon him,

Tired of this sort of persecution, Ronald, finding the youth alone in the smokingroom of the club, put the question to him simply and roundly: "Why do you seek to quarrel with me? I have no enmity to you. I think you a nice boy. Do you wish to make me fight you? I assure you, your trouble is wasted. I will never go out with you."

"Is it that you are afraid?" said the other, with a sneer.

"No," replied Ronald; "but I have killed a man in a duel. He had done me grievous wrong; but the thought of him haunts me continually. Night or day, I am never free from remorse."

"Is that so?" replied the youth, with something like contrition. "I was told that it was quite otherwise - that you went about boasting of the death of this man."

"And who told you that?" asked

Ronald sharply.

"It was Bianca. She lives with my mother, and she is the most beautiful creature in the world. It was her relation, the only friend that she had-and she tells me, 'Kill me this Englishman who murdered him, and I will love you."

"Ah, that is terrible," said Ronald. "Well, kill me if you like, Vicomte; but till then, let us be friends." And they shook hands over this strange compact.

Next time when they met, the youth

appeared with a gloomy face.

"My friend, he is not dead, this man; he has written to her. He is recovering from his wound, and she loves him, and

does not care for me."

The Vicomte looked the picture of despair; but for Ronald the news was most joyful-a weight was lifted from his heart, his gloom had vanished, and the world was bright to him once more. Still, it was evident that Bianca had not forgiven him. Often, on his way home, he found himself dogged by desperate-looking men, and one evening he received a stroke from a knife that, had it not been turned by his watch-case, would have put an end to his career. Evidently, Malta was not a safe place for him, and the yacht being now ready for sea, he had one tremendous bout of play at the club, lost all his winnings, and a little more, took a hasty leave of his friends-the Vicomte, who had won largely, was moved even to tears-and sailed early next morning for home.

CHAPTER XVI.

NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

IT was August in this present year of race, and along the wide sea front of Brighton, a general excitement and expectation was to be noticed. On the beach, bathing-men, fishermen, and loafers, were engaged with long telescopes; binoculars were in great request upon the pier-head; parties of horsemen and horsewomen cantering along the King's Road drew up, and shading their eyes with their hands, gazed anxiously seawards; carriages were drawn up by the railing; the green lawns of Hove were dotted with spectators, and the windows of hotels and lodging-houses, wherever the slightest view of the sea was attainable, were crowded with heads.

The cause of all this interest was the fact that a low, distant rumbling was heard, which might have been thunder, but that people thought was distant cannonading. One or two war-ships lay in the offing; these belonged to the British fleet. And it was thought that at this moment the ships of the invading squadron were engaged in breaking through their line, and were about to spread havoc all along the coast.

Excitement at the pier-head reached its height when a boat was seen approaching from some ship in the offing, which was thought to be a man-o'-war's boat bringing some intelligence of the progress of the maneuvres of the fleet to the authorities on shore. There landed, however, only a young man in civilian attire, a bronzed seafaring youth, with a gold-banded cap, and an elderly woman, tall and gaunt. "The boat," said the seamen left in charge, to eager questioners, "was from Mr. Carr's yacht, the Dream, just arrived from a cruise in distant seas."

"Yes, it is Ronald Carr," said a handsome young woman, who was leaning affectionately on her husband's arm.

Ronald started and turned on hearing his name pronounced, turned and encountered the gaze of Lady Hazlewood and her husband, the young artist Alphonse Deschamps. He doffed his hat, but his face showed anything but desire for further intercourse.

"Let me detain you a moment, Mr. Carr," continued Lady Hazlewood. "I have news of my dear stepdaughter."

Ronald's attention was enlisted at once, and he even took a seat graciously indicated to him by Lady Hazlewood, at her side, and allowed himself to be introduced to her husband. "Alphonse, you know, is a painter; he paints le monde. His next picture will be 'The Lawn at Goodwood.' The Duke gave us every facility. My Alphonse established his easel in a famous position. Well, among the first of the faces to attract his attention, was our

Kate; yes, with her uncle, Count Sarda. And they are coming to see us, Alphonse, me, and the bébé"—with a very becoming blush. "You will come, too? If Kate has forgiven me, I think you may."

"And your brother?" asked Ronald,

still icily.

"We have quarrelled; but I believe he is in England. He has behaved shamefully, and Kate has been so kind. Is it likely that I should be any longer of his faction? Indeed, there has been a great scandal about him. My poor Bianca; when I married she was obliged to leave me, and she joined a most excellent family in Malta. Well, I hear that she has left—run away—and I fear that she has followed my unhappy brother."

The evening papers had just come out, and newsboys were shouting vigorously one startling item of their news: "A Brighton mystery! A Brighton mystery! Strange tragedy at Brighton!" Alphonse, with a keen appetite for news, bought a paper, and his wife looked over his shoulder. Suddenly she gave a loud cry, and fell

almost fainting into his arms.

CHAPTER XVII,

A BRIGHTON MYSTERY.

This was the succinct announcement that appeared in the evening papers:

"A gentleman of foreign, but distinguished appearance, had reached Brighton by a morning train, and engaged rooms at one of the principal hotels. Some little time after a lady, young, handsome, and richly dressed, drove up to the hotel, having apparently arrived by a later train, and demanded to see him, giving a description of his person, for the name he had given at the hotel was apparently a feigned one. The hotel porter requesting to know what name to announce, the lady replied in an excited manner: You can say his wife.' After some demur the lady was admitted, and a stormy scene appears to have followed. Before long, however, more amicable relations were arrived at, and the parties went out together, as it seemed, on friendly terms. They hired a carriage and drove as far as Kemp Town, and then proceeded on foot along the path by the cliffs in the direction of Rot-Nothing certain is known of tingdean. their further movements; but a boatman, sailing along the coast, deposes that he witnessed something like a struggle on the top of the cliffs. His impression was that the lady fell or threw herself from the cliff, and that her companion, in endeavouring to save her, shared her fate. The two bodies were discovered lifeless on the beach. They have not been identified; but some articles of silver in the gentleman's dressing-case bear the monogram 'H. H.', with a Baron's coronet above."

On reading this paragraph, Ronald at once hurried away in a fever of anxiety to the place where the bodies had been deposited. There was no mistaking the stern determined face of Baron Hazlewood, that, in the pallid dignity of death, had something even heroic in its expression. But the other—Ronald trembled as the attendant removed the veil that covered the face of the dead woman. It was not what he dreaded; the features were those of poor Bianca. But why had she called herself his wife?

The explanation was forthcoming in a letter which was found among the Baron's

papers.

"MY OWN HECTOR" (ran the letter),-"I have the best right to your love, for I am your wife. We have stood before the priest together; the ring that he blessed you placed upon my finger; you swore that death only should part us-you and me-Bianca, and not Kate. She shuddered at your touch, and I loved you. When she lay fainting in my arms I said that she should not marry you. I put on the dress and veil that were waiting for her. room was dark; the priest was half blind; the old admiral saw nothing. But your sister, I think she found out; and you, did you not know me when you gave me that kiss? No other lips shall touch mine. If you should fling me away, I will die.-Your wife, BIANCA.

The mystery remains a mystery still to the world in general; but those who have read this narrative may find a clue to it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HER TRIUMPH.

"My dears, it was written in the stars long ago," said Dame Elspeth. "I tried to spell it out, but I could only read a

little bit here and there. But I knew that the path would be hard; but that if ye had the strength ye would win through it."

Ronald shook his head sceptically.

"The stars shine away," he said, brightly and coldly enough; but they don't take much interest in us."

"Ab, ye're but a faint-hearted unbeliever, my son," rejoined the dame. "Do you mind that story I told you about the Indian woman and her mistress, that happened in our own country, and that I promised to show you chapter and verse for?* Were the stars right there, or no?"

"Ronald," said Kate tenderly, "you must not rail at the stars, for they have

been very kind to us, I think."

They had all dined on board the Dream, as she lay anchored off Brighton shore, the whole family party, including the artist, who had been making studies of seamen in various attitudes, as long as daylight lasted. It was one of the few lovely nights of the present season, the sea calm, and the sky twinkling with myriads of stars, while along the shore shone tier upon tier of lights, which stretched as far as the eye could see, as if the whole coast were lighted up for some high festival.

A festival it was, for two of those on board, Kate and Ronald, had plighted their faith again; and now there were no impediments in the way of their happy union. Carrholme and Hazlewood would now be joined together, and every one along the coast of rugged cliff-land would rejoice.

"And when the wedding-day comes," said Dame Elspeth, "we will have a bonfire on the Topping that shall light up the whole country, and that shall bring good fortune and no longer evil luck to Hazle-

wood."

"For to conquer the love of all, and hold it as a blessing; to be staunch to her friends, and true to her sweetheart; and to keep her sweet face that everybody may love to see it." Thus we read the stars for Kate Hazlewood. If the peril has been keen, great is her triumph.

^{*} A promise fulfilled in "The Sibyl's Story," page 41.

THE LIEUTENANT'S STORY.

THERE is plenty of monotony in a sailor's life, and after a cruise that had been deadly dull off the coast of Siam, it came as a real relief to be ordered by cable at Singapore into Chinese waters on a pirate chase. Not that we anticipated any very warm work. It was more likely to be a game at hide and seek—cunning against cunning—for these yellow-skinned rascals have a wholesome dread of getting to close quarters with a man-o'-war, and, seeing how the odds stand, I am not the one to say that this reflects upon their courage. theless, it was change, and there is sometimes magic in the mere word.

The Rajah was an old tub, but a "Handsome stout one, and a rare sailer. is as handsome does," was Captain Webster's answer to any who smiled the smile of scorn at her lines. Every man rated on the Rajah's books knew that once she could fairly slip in between the buccaneers and their shore-haunts, the doom of the

scoundrels was sealed.

To me there was novelty in this work. It had hitherto remained the one item in the ordinary programme of my profession with which I had absolutely no acquaintance except from hearsay. The case was widely different with Captain Webster. Again and again he had rendered police service to the polyglot commerce of the Eastern seas; and his methods were framed

on the teachings of the past.

Not at first, in the present instance, with conspicuous success. We cruised about for a fortnight, searching, without seeming to search, every curve and swell of the shore line between two indicated points; and in vain. Reporting our failure at Swatow, what was our chagrin to find that an outrage of peculiar atrocity had been committed in our wake, and off a certain bold and ill-reputed promontory under the lee of which the Rajah had laid in ambush-so to speak-for two whole days! A trader from Brisbane had been looted. Her boats were scuttled; with practised pains she was rendered unmanageable; and then the hapless crew were forced to submit to be bound hand and foot, and were left - as so many animated logs-to starve or sink; or, if Fortune's wheel turned, to be rescued. Luckily, it was the latter.

There were faces both blank and black

in our mess-cabin when this report was The effcontery of the deed brought. staggered us.

"They shall pay for this, or I'll get out of the navy as an impostor and an old woman," growled Captain Webster, his huge face red as his own bandanna with wrath. Not a man of us but thirsted for the frav.

Once more we sailed, and straight for Lulu Point. Captain Webster was confident that the pirate rendezvous was near.

I shared his opinion.

Our look-out man became a person of exceptional importance. He was bidden to report instanter any suspicious sign, either inland, or on the wide blue track across which we had ploughed.

"A woman signalling from the beach." This was the puzzling announcement that came from Dan Lees aloft.

circumstance had been simultaneously noted by my own immediate senior, the first lieutenant. What it portended we were

one and all at a loss to imagine.

The Rajah's course was altered a few points, and the female figure, standing solitary on a little spit of land, grew in distinctness—a woman of our own race and not a semi-savage.

"What do you think of it, Captain ?"

the first lieutenant asked.

"I don't think at all; I prefer to wait

and see," answered Webster.

It sounded uncivil, but it was only the old man's manner; he was an honest British bear, and bruin would not be bruin without his snarl. The next minute he was requesting, rather than commanding, his senior officer to superintend the lowering, manning, and arming of a boat.

We were on the tip-toes of expectation until the parties returned. They brought the woman with them. She was a majestic creature, and might have served for a model of Cleopatra. Her beauty was of a type oftener encountered in Southern lands than in England. It was lustrous, large, full-orbed. Her hair was raven-black, her eyes shimmered like twin lakes of night set in dusky caverns, her features were rounded and regular, and her complexion, though that of a very pronounced brunette, was singularly pure. The face as a whole suggested slumbering possibilities of passion. She was perhaps thirty.

"A glorious -- animal," whispered Captain

Webster to me.

And my verdict coincided.

It was a queer story to which, in slightly

varying versions, the entire ship's crew

had shortly listened.

Mrs. Kemble—this was the name given -was of English extraction, but Trinidad Her husband had been actingmanager for a firm of Hong-Kong merchants. Six weeks ago he had persuaded her to accompany him in a small barge, "The Silver Star," bound for the port of Shanghae. The pirates had swooped down on the little vessel, rummaged and scuttled it, and had set its crew, herself included, adrift without sail or oar in a leaky boat. They were driven A storm sprang up. helplessly on to a lee shore. And then she remembered no more until she awoke to consciousness on a long sandy ridge with the waves lapping at her feet. There was no sign of her recent comrades in misfortune, and she could only conclude that they had perished, while some huge breaker had swept her far up the shingle into safety. And she had since subsisted by her wits as a female Robinson Crusoe—with a difference. There were a few native fisher huts in a cove, perhaps a mile to the south, and here, where she looked for molestation, she had experienced surly kindness. But her hope had been that an English vessel would examine the coast for traces of the marauders, and that then she would be able to escape from her wretched durance. We had come when this hope was nearly submerged by the tides of despair.

Webster put Mrs. Kemble Captain through a stiff cross-examination, and she adhered to every statement, giving fuller particulars at any stage of the narrative where he demanded them. Jack Tars are proverbially susceptible, and I believe every man was moved by this tragic taleillustrated by the streaming eyes of the disconsolate sufferer-to vow that if once the Rajah got a fair haul on the wretches who were committing this series of crimes, it should not be his fault if the villains lived to be hung. I confess my own blood boiled at the fiendish malice of

the sea robbers.

Only the Captain seemed a trifle more stolid than before. He had scarce a word for any one. The taciturnity was a token that his thoughts were deeply engrossed. As Dickson, the chief gunner, would have said, with nautical metaphor, he was crowding on all sail to overtake a racer. There was a riddle to the fore.

It was shortly rumoured that the Captain had decided to return to Swatow, and fall we were under Lulu Point, and next

there transfer Mrs. Kemble to the care of the authorities who would arrange for the remainder of her journey to Hong-Kong. The first lieutenant vacated his cabin in favour of beauty in distress.

But the same afternoon we signalled a Yankee, also bound southwards, and the Captain seized his chance. He informed his guest that she would be received with all courtesy and kindness under the flag of the Republic, and that she need be under no apprehensions of a second catastrophe, seeing that the Boston brig was by no

means the minnow that such sharks would

dare to attack.

If ever a woman looked crestfallen and terrified while striving her utmost to dissemble those feelings, it was Mrs. Kemble. I was close to her elbow when she tried to express acquiescence and gratitude, and I knew that her speech was at the antipodes -for whatever reason-of her wishes and actual sentiments. Her face for many a second was haggard and colourless. furtive despair was in the wonderful eyes. The lines of the sensuous mouth were rigid and harsh. But objection was useless, and she knew it. Not only so, it would have cast inevitable doubt upon her bona fides from the first.

"Yes, I am obliged; I will go," she

said.

She stepped back when about to descend into the Captain's gig, and, as if it were an afterthought, communicated information that surely ought to have been given much earlier.

"From what I could make out from the people who gave me food, the pirates belong to villages to the north of the Straits of Formosa," she said, with hurried "Show them no mercy, they emphasis. have robbed me of all—all!"

The woman was a consummate actress if this were not the voice of genuine passion -a fierce cry for vengeance. Nevertheless, there were two of us now-the Captain and myself—who preferred to

credit her with histrionic gifts.

With what seemed afterwards brutal celerity, the Rajah tacked at once in such a manner as to show that she was about to resume her interrupted work of coast hugging, and that Webster, in spite of Mrs. Kemble's advice by implication, had no idea of pushing immediately up the Straits. And I could hazard a shrewd guess at what was in his thoughts.

I was not wide of the mark. By night-

day we rounded it. Taking frequent soundings, the Rajah crept into the winding channel. Suddenly a dingy with three men on board pulled out of a cove to the left, and with startled haste drew athwart our track and vanished. A few more minutes and, as if by magic, the coast scroll opened out. Before us was a secluded upper reach of the same deep sea channel. It was a capital, natural harbour, and in it were moored a couple of the queer, quaint Chinese vessels which bear the name of junks-big unwieldy boats, which could yet carry plenty of canvas, and on open ocean would undoubtedly have given the Rajah a troublesome chase, and, perhaps, have escaped. They were safely trapped now.

Captain Webster was a changed man. All his phlegm broke up, and he was as full of vivacity as a Frenchman. And I believe every soul on board shared his enthusiasm. We had the honour of our age to vindicate. These pests, whom it was our business to exterminate, were an anomaly in the nineteenth century. A period was to be put at last to their career of mischief, and to the discredit it

entailed.

The question we were all asking was this: "Would the enemy show fight?" Our ardent hope was that he would. The strange exhilaration of battle was already in our veins. And it would enhance the glory of the exploit if we had to report a stubborn resistance overcome.

But it seemed that our wishes were not to be gratified. The dingy had taken timely notice of our approach, and we saw the ruffians incontinently taking to the element like so many water-rats, and then swarming up the shore behind. It was

a stampede.

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Out boats! was now the word. The first-lieutenant took command of one, and I was in charge of the other, and away we

raced for the shore.

All was calm and still, the water like glass, nothing moving on the strip of beach, while the jungle behind with its gorgeous tropical vegetation seemed as quiet as the grave. My beat was in advance and had almost reached the shore, when a puff of smoke whiffed out from the jungle; and, before the report of the gun reached my ears, we were all scrambling in the water, for the heavy jingall ball had knocked a hole in our craft. It was a good shot or a lucky one, and was followed by a howl of exultation from the jungle, and next

moment the beach was alive with hundreds of wild-looking ruffians who hacked at us with spear and sword as we struggled to

gain a footing on terra firma.

Meantime Captain Webster had kept an eager watch upon the proceedings, and as soon as the pirates opened fire from the jungle, a couple of shells from the Rajah whistled over our heads and exploded among the foliage, setting the birds and beasts screaming and chattering like mad, but doing no particular harm to our enemies. For a time I thought that all was over with us; the yellow skins fought like demons led on by their chief, a tall, powerful fellow, who looked like a European in face, although he wore the Malay costume. In the confusion their weapons were as good as ours and better, for their heavy and razor-like krisses dealt terrible blows. I had managed to get a footing on the beach, and half-a-dozen bluejackets had rallied round me and were making play with bayonet and cutlass, when the chief desperado bore down upon us and singled As a natural conme out for attack. sequence of the ducking it had suffered, my revolver missed fire. Next moment the fellow closed with me and his long knife was gleaming over me, when Phil Brook, my coxswain, got a blow at him with his cutlass. It was a well-dealt cut, and knocked the knife out of the pirate's hand and sent him sprawling on the ground. He was not killed, however, although Phil's cutlass was twisted up with the blow, and his men closed about him and carried him off to the jungle. Mean-time our comrades had landed a little higher up the channel, and their fire began to tell upon the thickly-clustered pirates. My own fellows, too, were getting into form and working forward, firing rapidly, and the enemy began to give ground.

Soon the rascals broke and made for the jungle, leaving twenty or thirty dead and wounded stretched upon the beach. Our men followed pell mell, and, had the enemy rallied, we might have had reason to regret our rashness. As it was, deprived of their leader, they lost heart and thought only of flight, and we rushed a strong stockade armed with cannon, which was concealed within the jungle, and which might have cost us heavy loss had it been resolutely defended, and we captured their camp and all the plunder they had collected there. But the birds were all flown, and it was useless to urge further pursuit. Our loss, indeed, had been serious, five men killed

and twenty or thirty suffering from wounds and contusions, and among these was Philip Brook, who had saved my life and received at the same time an ugly gash from a spearpoint.

"Humph!" said Captain Webster, when I made my report as to the captured loot. "That looks like system-as if the scoundrels had an ambitious leader, and one who intended an extensive trade. hope he tasted steel or lead."

"There was a fellow over six feet-a regular giant—who fought like a possessed man. I had a narrow squeak with him.

Perhaps it was he," I answered.

The result of the day's doings was that a gallant blow had been struck against a tyranny of terror, that the old Rajah had won fresh laurels, and that a very considerable quantity of booty was carried back to Swatow and placed in the hands of the Queen's representatives, pending the application of claimants.

And now enters the coincidence of which I spoke at the outset. I would call it strange, wonderful, but that I have found the threads in life's vast web again and again cross and part, and in quite another

part of the fabric reunite.

It was eighteen months later, and the Rajah to our relief was homeward bound. Gibraltar was reached, and there Captain Webster granted a few of us leave for a run ashore. The port, beneath its trappings of gaiety, is often insufferably But a day's sensation had been created by the capture of two alleged notorious offenders-smugglers on a large scale, bill-forgers, and I know not what beside. They were taken in disguise at the very time of our landing. I saw them marched to prison: a man of some forty summers, with the most sinister-looking countenance on which it was ever my lot to gaze; and Mrs. Kemble.

She it was. I assisted at an investigation in the stuffy chamber that did duty for a special court. But no word of mine was needed except as corroboration. Captain Webster was in the forefront, and the female prisoner looked him unblushingly in the face. She stopped the pre-

liminary proceedings.

"You will believe me; there are those here who can prove part of what I say. I'll out with it all, and then do what you like—only send him to prison—to prison, out of my sight!"

And she stamped her feet and gesticulated as I had seen her once before. She was pointing her finger of hatred and scorn at the cowering wretch whose name she also bore upon the charge-sheet.

"Listen," she said. "I have a happy home at Hong-Kong. My father lives there still; he is a merchant's clerk. this man came. He told me-Bah!that he loved me. I married him. And I ran away from my friends to do it. And he was getting money wickedly then. He traded with sea-thieves. He took me to It was horrible!" she their haunts. shuddered with digust. "And when the Captain over there came with his ship to put a stop to the thieves' tricks, I was sent to lure them away with a false tale; and for love of him I did it." With a superb gesture of disdain she again indicated her reputed husband. "The game failed, as the Captain-I forget his name-can tell you; he was not to be blinded by any dust that I could throw in his eyes-the Captain of the Rajah wasn't. thieves were mostly killed, and I gave Peeko up for dead, too. But he wasn't; no such luck. He had taken care of his precious skin. I got back, it doesn't matter how, to Hong-Kong, and he was there before me. And there was a tale of property waiting to be claimed at Swatow, and he made me get some of it by false swearing. Then, for fear he should be found out, he came right away, through Suez, here. And a nice game he has been playing. Everything that's charged against Austin Hollis Peeko is true-true; and Two days ago we plenty more besides. quarrelled, and he told me that I was not his wife at all, and never had been. When he married me he had a wife living in England. I pity her, and I hate him. Yes, it has all come to hate. He thought I was too crushed a creature to stir under It was a mistake." his foot.

The old, old tale; jealousy, cruel as the

grave!

The Rajah had to leave. But tragedy in the interval had rounded off the narrative to which Captain Webster and I had listened. Peeko had committed suicide by hanging in his cell.

On arrival in England, I wrote to my Gibraltar acquaintance for information as to the fate of Mrs. Kemble, alias Peeko. The answer was that she had been set free,

and had returned to Hong-Kong.

THE SIBYL'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

"AUGUST FIRST, 1886.—I have warned her, but she will not heed. She mocks at the stars, and what they tell me. they have said, 'And sorrow and dishonour lie in the path she is taking with such eager feet and happy eyes.' I am old. But I shall live to see it. If I could but read -- But the stars are patient, in-They will not hasten. scrutable. keep back what they will, and leave us, miserable worms and mortal, to tread out our own expiation in gloom and sorrow. They tell us that evil is coming; but if we will not heed, they leave us to face it, without one glimpse into the future that shall be made out of our present. Sorrow and treachery and dishonour overshadowing her path! How shall she walk that she do not fail by the way? Allah is great! May she come out undefiled in the fature the stars keep yet to themselves."

The old Indian woman closed her book, in which she had written, her heart full of dread for the girl whose destiny she had read in the stars, and who had mocked at it with her careless laughter. This girl's life had been happy, though some nameless evil had always lurked in its background. This shadow had been drawing nearer as she grew out of childhood into maidenhood. And now it was close at hand. The stars had said it. In what shape it was to come, the old woman could not yet That was the terror of it. It would unfold itself, day by day, until at last it stood bare in all its hideous shape, built up by cause, effect, and circumstances, casting its shadow all along the path her darling What the end would be, had to tread. she could not tell. A sudden blank fell on her vision. The stars spoke no more. It seemed as if a veil were dropped between her and the future she was straining her eyes to see. That sudden silence of the stars chilled the blood in her veins.

"And so that old Indian sibyl of yours doesn't want you to come and pay us a

While the old woman sat upstairs, her heart heavy within her, the girl who had roused all the anguish and dread was laughing and talking in the drawing-room below. She had a visitor, a distant connection of her father's. She had only

He made his acquaintance a week before. had come up to town from Derbyshire, where he lived with his wife, whose money had made him one of the wealthiest men in the county. His life of pleasure and luxury was so far removed from the straitened circumstances of the retired invalid officer, that he never even remembered his existence till that day, a week before, when he had met him walking in the Park, leaning on the arm of his

daughter.

The result of that meeting had been a charming letter from the as yet un-known wife in Derbyshire, inviting the Elinor was Mays to pay them a visit. looking pale and a little thin. The heat in London had tried her, and it was arranged that she should accept the invitation, and travel under the escort of Gerald Holt, who was leaving town at the end of the week. Captain May, who had been included in the invitation, had declined it. His constant ill-health had made him indolent, and he never left town, finding himself more comfortable in his own house, waited upon by an old Indian man-servant who had devoted his life to his master's service, as Ayesha had devoted hers to her young mistress. Gerald Holt had delayed his journey, to give Elinor time to make all the preparations necessary to girls when going away on a visit. It was the very first visit she had ever paid; her life had been spent in the narrowest Her father's ill-health and scanty means, combined with the selfish indolence of a confirmed invalid, had gradually withdrawn them from all friends and acquaintances, and this visit was like the opening of a new world to her. The only shadow on it was the intense dislike her old nurse showed to it. She was talking of this now to Gerald Holt, who had dropped in, as he had been doing every day since he had re-made their acquaintance. She and he had grown very friendly. She seemed to have known him for years. It was a new experience, this handsome, clever young man, who had stepped suddenly out of an unknown world to her. This afternoon, in the pleasant familiarity which had already sprung up between them, she had told Gerald how bitterly set Ayesha was against the visit.

"She is afraid it will be a different life, and you will like the new life better, and not come back to her any more," said

Gerald Holt, laughing.

"No; she is afraid," and a shadow darkened the girl's eyes. It seemed as if some of the old woman's dread touched her for a moment. But her Western scepticism came to her aid, and she shook it off, meeting the young man's amused wonder with frank, laughing eyes.

"The stars speak against it!" she said with mock solemnity. "She says there is a shadow darkening the air of your house, and that if I enter it, I shall share the

doom that menaces it!"

The young man laughed too, but his lips twitched suddenly, and as he turned away, to hide the momentary weakness, a savage and cruel light shone in his eyes.

CHAPTER IL.

THE next day, they started for Derby-Elinor enjoyed the journey im-It was all so fresh and new. mensely. Gerald Holt watched over her comfort, and talked to her as he rarely troubled to talk to women, and made the time speed so quickly, that the journey seemed ended almost as soon as it had begun. Mrs. Holt was awaiting them at the station. was a tall, sallow-cheeked woman, apparently some years older than her husband. Her greeting of Elinor cast a sudden chill on the girl's happy excitement. Mrs. Holt's manner was stiff and cold, and Elinor, remembering the warm letter of invitation she had received from her, was bewildered for a moment. But after Mrs. Holt had exchanged a few words of greeting aside with her husband—and Elinor noticed how wonderfully the sallow, rather sullenlooking face lighted up at the sight of himher manner became more cordial; Elinor responded eagerly to the change, with her own natural brightness and courtesy. She put away again with some shame, another suspicion that struck her as they entered the carriage waiting for them outside the station, that this cordiality was only forced. Perhaps Gerald Holt also suspected it. any rate, he had a long talk with his wife on his arrival at the house.

And when Mrs. Holt came down with rather red eyes to the drawing-room, where she found Elinor already waiting, she spoke to the girl in quite a friendly manner. She found Elinor dressed in one of the pretty gowns her father had given her, standing admiring herself in one of the big mirrors. She started and blushed hotly, as she saw Mrs. Holt's face reflected in the

mirror, beside hers, and then she caught her breath as something flashed into the elder woman's eyes.

Greystone Hall was a large, rambling house, situated in a dip of bare, bleak hills. It was a strange spot to choose for a dwelling-place, when within a few miles were exquisite dales and fertile uplands. But it was an old house, and had belonged to the Holts for generations. It had suited the tastes of the founders of the family, who were of a warlike and quarrelsome disposition, decidedly not particular as to their modes of self-enrichment.

It was more convenient for many reasons to have a house in an isolated and, in those days, when roads were few, almost inac-

cessible spot.

Perhaps ill-gotten gains take to themselves wings, quicker than more lawful spoils. At any rate, the family during the generations preceding the present representative, had grown poorer, till when Gerald Holt entered in possession, it was of a ruined estate. His marriage had saved him. There were no signs now, of the crisis the family fortune had gone

through.

The great house, set in perfect repair, was exquisitely furnished, the modern blending cunningly with the old. There were serving men and women. beautiful, extensive grounds were one of the sights of that part of the county, as was the house itself. There were carriages and house. The best society visited and hornes. there, and Gerald Holt was respected in the county; a justice of peace, and it was rumoured, a probable Member. And all this had come of his wife's money. The month passed like a dream of delight Gerald Holt was a perfect to Elinor. host. Mrs. Holt did not always accompany them on the rides and drives they took together.

She laboured under the delusion that she was a confirmed invalid. She visited little among her neighbours, and after a time, Elinor, seeing what an effort it was for Mrs. Holt to chaperon her to some tennis or luncheon party, gave up the pleasure of accepting a great many of the invitations that came to her, and contented herself with riding and driving, and wandering about the beautiful grounds of Grey-Gerald Holt, clever, wellstone Hall, educated, with an innate power of pleasing, was society enough. One day, Mrs. Holt, who had been suffering considerably for the last few days, exciting Elinor's pity 10

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and sympathy, for she looked really ill, announced her intention of accompanying them on the drive arranged for the afternoon. Elinor was very glad. She did not like Mrs. Holt. To her, she seemed a disagreeable, sullen woman, who would sit silent for hours together, ignoring all efforts at conversation. But in her kindly sympathy, the girl set it down to ill-health, and was really pleased at the prospect of Mrs. Holt's being well enough to accompany them that afternoon. But the drive was a failure. Mrs. Holt sat through it so sullen and silent, and once spoke so rudely to Elinor in answer to some question, that the latter, hurt and chilled, could scarcely throw off the disagreeable impression. Gerald Holt was moody and silent too, and when they reached Greystone Hall again Elinor entered the house, disappointed, uneasy, with a vague uneasiness she could not analyse. Mrs. Holt went up to her room, and her husband followed her. When the door was closed, he faced her, as she sat down with the same sullen, ill-tempered eyes, and began to pull off her gloves.

"What do you mean by treating my relation like this, Maria?" he asked quietly, but his eyes were glowing, and his

face pale.

In an instant the woman's smouldering rage blazed into a fury. She sprang to her feet, her face convulsed, her hands gloves in her passion. rending the "Because you love her! You love that pink and white-faced doll-thatword choked in her throat; it was well, for he took a step forward, and his eyes looked like murder; "while I, your wife, whose money you live on, who brought you out of ruin and infamy, am despised, insulted _" Then she turned with a swift step to the door. "I will face her! I will tell her! I will-

But he had caught her hands in his. "You shall not!" he cried, between his

"You shall not!" set teeth.

But in her rage and jealous fury she was almost his match, strong man as he was. He could scarcely force her back into her chair. He saw by her blazing eyes, her figure trembling with the passion that rent her, that she was beyond his Hitherto he had managed her. To-day, she was stronger than himself. He thought of Elinor, and of how this raging woman would go to her, and tear from her eyes the veil with which her own

Elinor would leave the house, and he and she would be parted for ever. Rage, despair, sickening dread, gave him cun-

ning.
"My dear little wife," and he forced his and glaring up at him with her raging eyes, "what folly have you got in your head now ? That child! Good Heavens, Maria, do you take me for a fool, or are you mad yourself?" and he laughed.

As he spoke, as he looked down with those handsome eyes she loved so well, as his voice grew softer, as he suddenly sat down on the arm of her chair and passed his arm about her, the raging storm within her received a check. She felt he was lying; she knew he loved her no more-if he had ever loved her; but the old spell he had cast over her once, when he had wooed her fortune and won her heart, reasserted its power. As he held her tenderly, uttering gentle words of remonstrance, pleading, which grew easier to him as he felt the rigid bent figure relax, a sob broke from her, and he knew he had conquered. She suddenly flung her arms about him and broke into wild, hysterical tears, and words of foolish entreaty and reproach. He thought of Elinor, and the tears and the pitiful self-abandonment of this woman whom he hated, filled him with loathing. But for Elinor's sake he submitted, and even kissed her in return.

"But she must go away!" she said, raising her head at last, with a flash of jealous fury again lighting her eyes. consented. He could do nothing else-

for his guilty love's sake.

CHAPTER III.

THAT evening Mrs. Holt was really ill. The scene of the afternoon had exhausted her mentally and physically, and she retired to her room after dinner with a racking attack of neuralgia. Elinor's offers of service were declined, though Mrs. Holt had treated her with civility at dinner, and even seemed to wish to make some amends for her discourtesy in the afternoon. Elinor was only too glad to forget it. But the dinner was scarcely more pleasant than the drive. She felt that there was some constraint between the husband and wife, while Gerald Holt himself, usually so amusing, sat pale and silent at the head of his table, evidently only rousing himself innocence had blinded her. And then to talk with an effort, while it seemed to Elinor, grown so accustomed to his kindly courtesy that the slightest change in his manner was perceptible to her, that he was even a little cold and distant to her. She wondered if she had in any way offended him. She felt dull and depressed too, in herself, she scarcely knew why. The depression grew, rather than lessened, even under Mrs. Holt's kinder manner. She almost began to feel glad that she had only two more days to spend there. Gerald Holt had said something about her prolonging her visit, but Mrs. Holt had not invited her to stay any longer; and now she felt that even if she asked her, she would not stay. After dinner she left the drawing-room, in which she was sitting alone, as Mrs. Holt had gone to her room, and Gerald had not yet come from the dining-room, and wandered down into the garden. She never cared for the drawingroom. It was a great square room, and its luxurious grandeur of furniture and hangings, its tall mirrors, seemed always to oppress her. There was no touch of homeliness about it. Mrs. Holt seemed powerless ever to impart this subtle spirit to a room. She remembered, too, that first evening when, catching sight of herself as she passed one of the mirrors in her pretty evening dress, she had suddenly discovered that she was beautiful.

In the shock of surprise and delight she had stopped and gazed at herself, to see suddenly reflected in the mirror Mrs. Holt's face, full of anger and hate. The expression passed as she turned swiftly to look at her hostess, only to meet now a smiling face. But that strange look of malignant dislike seemed always to haunt that mirror, and linger in the air of the great, grand room. Elinor escaped from it now with a sigh of relief, into the dusky,

fragrant garden.

The passionless eyes of the far-off stars seemed to look down on her, calming the strange throbbing and unrest that stirred her pulses. She lifted her eyes to the unfathomable blue of the heavens above, and thought how beautiful they were. Perhaps the thought was akin to a prayer, for the brilliant excitement of this troubled unrest faded from her eyes and left them sweet, and strong, and serious. It was well she was all unconsciously prepared for the ordeal she was to go through. She strolled on through the grounds. One part of the garden had been left to a certain picturesque reglect; it sloped here, up the side of one of the bare hills which shut in

the Hall and its grounds. She passed through the little wicket-gate that opened on to the hillside, and began mounting the stony winding path leading to its summit.

She scarcely knew why she chose such a walk. She seemed irresistibly drawn on. She felt that up there she would be nearer the stars. Perhaps Ayesha's superstition had tinged ber, without her knowing it, and she had some indefinable sense of approaching peril, and a vague yearning for their eternal steadfastness and strength. She mounted higher and higher, a little breathless and tired as the loose stones slipped from under her feet, but carried on by a desire to reach the summit, which was still so far above her.

Suddenly she stopped, she could go no further, and sank down on a boulder lying by the roadside, to rest, a pretty and strange sight in that place. A slender, graceful girl figure, in her dainty evening dress, a filmy cloud of white lace twisted round her head and throat, resting there on the desolate, lonely hillside, with the hush and darkness of night about her.

Gerald Holt, mounting up from the garden below, caught sight of her at last, as he turned a curve in the mounting road. He had been following her afar off, ever since she left the drawing-room. He had been smoking, but he had long ago flung away his cigar, which had gone out between his set teeth, and was now walking, with savage eyes and pain-disfigured face, torn by the conflicting passions of the hell within him. More than once he had stopped, his better angel hushing for a moment the fierce revolt of the black passions and despair that tore him; but he had gone on again, the evil conquering the good.

At the sight of Elinor seated there, almost, it seemed, as if awaiting his coming, the good was vanquished irrevocably by the sudden fierce onslaught of love, desire, and desperate pain. She did not hear him till he was near her. She was startled out of her half-dreamy recalling of Ayesha's curious dread of her coming to Greystone Hall, and her conviction that the stars had spoken against it, by hearing Gerald Holt's footsteps on the still night air.

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ways wore these particular roses now. They were her favourite roses, and grew just under her window, framing it in; even at this late time of the year, they clustered thick in their creamy fragrance about it. She thought, too, as suddenly, how very handsome he was, and how good and kind he had been to her. Then suddenly a great fear and trembling fell on her, and she half turned, with a desperate desire to hurry on, and reach the summit of the hill, and get out of his presence for ever. But she was too late. He stood before her.

"Elinor!" he said, in a strange, low tone.

His face was very white, but his eyes were smiling with a tender, gentle light. It stirred her to her very heart's depths. The earth seemed to waver beneath her feet; all the dark, luminous air seemed full of flashing, falling stars.

Her hands found themselves clasped in his. She felt herself slowly, gently, but with an irresistible force, being drawn into the light shining from his eyes. Her whole soul was escaping her, to be absorbed, consumed in the fire and passion of his.

" Elinor !"

A faint, far-off voice, appealing, reproachful, and yet with a note of anger, a voice she knew, fell suddenly on the awful suspense and silence of the moment when her soul stood on the brink of destruction. She snatched her hands away, staggering back.

"Ayesha!" she cried, her panting breath

choking in a sob in her throat.

He had heard nothing. He only saw that in some strange, inexplicable way she had escaped him. She looked at him for a moment with dazed eyes, before which he shrank back. Through their bewilderment and horror the beauty and purity of her woman's soul looked. She turned and ran down the road like a wild thing, heedless of the rough stones as they tore her slight evening shoes and bruised her feet; of the brambles catching at the dainty laces of her dress. For a moment he stood rigid, still. Then a curse broke from him.

What had frightened her too soon? Her soul had been sleeping its dream of ignorant innocence. If he could but have called it into waking life, her woman's pride and strength would have been weakened before it had even taken alarm. But something had aroused her before the love lying asleep within her had strength to assert its nower. She was a woman now

—understanding, knowing. How was he to win her?

But there, in the night, with the bleak silence of the everlasting hills around him, with his own raging and baffled passions within, he could see no way but one.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Elinor reached home the next day—she having left Greystone Hall the first thing in the morning—she heard that Ayesha was dead. They had found her, the evening before, lying on the floor in her room. She was quite dead. There had been a strange expression on her face of fear and anger; but it seemed to have passed away now under the calming touch of death, and when Elinor went into the darkened room to look at her, she lay beautiful with the inscrutable peace of the eternal rest.

She must have died between nine and ten, as she was found shortly after ten, and old Mahommed had spoken to her, as she sat there writing, about nine o'clock. The hour had struck as he stood talking to her, and he had gone away a few minutes after. The book she was writing in had been closed, and tied with a ribbon. Pushed in the ribbon was a slip of paper, on which was written:

"For Elinor. Read the last page, and no more; then, as you value the love I have borne you, destroy the book."

Elinor read the inscription with eyes in which the blinding tears had suddenly been dried by awe and amazement, full of fear and gratitude. Between nine and ten she had stood with Gerald Holt on the hillside; she had heard Ayesha's voice. Had she come to save her? Her soul, bursting the bonds of its earthly fetters, had made one supreme effort to rouse the thoughtless, undisciplined, careless soul of the girl she had loved better than her life. It was Ayesha's voice she had heard on the Derbyshire hillside, at the moment when Ayesha's body lay still and cold in death on the floor in that far-off London house.

When she was at last able to open the book, Elinor read the entry that stood at the head of the page. It was the one written on the first of August. Below it was another:

But something had aroused her before the love lying asleep within her had strength to assert its power. She was a woman now patience? What are we before their infinite patience? Why should my weak hands

impiously and vainly try to tear down the veil they have dropped between this and Elinor's future fate? I will wait. The veil will be drawn in full time. But it is awful and weary to have to sit so still, while she treads that path over which the clouds of sorrow, and dishonour, and black treachery have gathered so close. These hideous shapes are about her now. How may she abide their awful peril and pass through them unharmed ? Allah is great! Will He show me a way to defend her? Who is to stand between her and this fiend in man's This Gerald Holt, with his shape? beautiful face and smiling eyes. How is she to see the treachery and murder that lie hidden behind this fair mask? But it is there. His feet will not hesitate. His hands are ready. His will is relentless. He will stay for nothing, so that he may win the girl. Will he win? Allah!. What do I see-there on the hillside in the star-light?-it is he and she! She is trembling like a frightened child! She knows nothing of her danger. She thinks him all that is good and noble. In her innocence and ignorance, all unknowingly, she worships him. Unless she awakes herself, before he awakes her to the power of the love within her, she will be unprepared-she will be helpless, before his pitiless, inexorable will. Her eyes must open to see the evil in him, before he casts the glamour of his fatal love over them, to bewilder her and make it hard to see the path of everlasting light. Child! See! There is murder in his heart. He will go home from you to-night, to his wife's She is lying sleeping there, ex-

hausted by pain, which he has caused by his heartless cruelty. The medicine for soothing that pain is by her side. What is easier than to let it escape?—it is an accident. The poison is subtle—it fills the air, and each breath she draws brings her nearer the gates of death, and lessens the space between you and him. See! She is dead! They find her in the dawn. Child! Your hands are in his! They are stained with his wife's blood. He is drawing you nearer! His lips are perjured by the blackest of perjury. Child! Elinor!...

"Oh! The veil has been rent. Allah is great! I must hasten. The stars have spoken. She will read and believe

now-"

The last words were written in a feeble, tremulous hand. There was a splash of ink as if the pen had fallen from her hand. But with a last supreme effort she must have closed the book, and left it for the girl she had died to save.

The next day, Elinor saw a paragraph in the paper. Mrs. Gerald Holt, of Greystone Hall, had died by an accident. She had gone to sleep, suffering from a severe headache. The chloroform bottle she had kept by her side, had come unstoppered in the night, and the contents saturating the sheet and the pillow, had killed her.

Was it an accident? The coroner's inquest so decided. Was it murder? So Elinor, looking into Gerald's eyes, when two months later, he asked her to be his wife, knew! Her eyes spoke. He went out of her presence; nor did they ever see each other again.

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TABLE OF EVENTS, 1887-1888.

SEPTEMBER, 1887.

Departure of the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany from England.

5.—Shortly before the conclusion of the performance, a terribly fatal fire broke out on the stage of the new Theatre Royal, Exeter, which spread with such rapidity that, in less than an hour, the whole building was totally destroyed, nearly 200 persons losing their lives by fire or suffocation. Nothing approaching such a catastrophe at the burning of a theatre ever happened before in this country.

9.—Serious rioting at Mitchelstown, County Cork, resulting in three men being killed, while a considerable number, both of the rioters and the constabulary, were more or less injured in this unfortunate affair.

11.—Fatal collision between the Irish constabulary and Moonlighters, near Ennis, head-constable Whelan being killed, and others of the police badly hurt. Eight of the ruffians were captured, nearly all of whom had been wounded in the affray.

13.—At Doncaster, the great Yorkshire Handicap won by Merry Duchess, and the Cham-

pagne Stakes by Ayrshire.

14.—The Doncaster St. Leger won by Kilwarlin, who defeated Merry Hampton (the Derby winner), Timothy, and six others.

17.—Parliament prorogued by Royal Commission, after a session of the unusually long period of thirty-three weeks.

Terrible railway collision at Hexthorpe, near Doncaster, an express having run into a stationary excursion train. Twenty-four passengers killed, and many others badly hurt in the excursion train; no one in the express being seriously injured.

18.—Fatal fire at 274, Strand, in the occupation of one Serné, a hairdresser, his two boys being burnt to death. Serné was tried on the capital charge and acquitted; but was subsequently convicted of wilful incendiarism, and sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude.

20.—Launch, at Portsmouth, of the Trafalgar, the largest and most powerful iron-clad ever constructed in this country. When fully equipped, this great war-ship will weigh 12,000 tons, and cost nearly a million of money.

21.—At Exeter, the inquest into the cause of the loss of life at the recent fire at the Theatre Royal, resulted in a verdict of "accidental death." The jury, however, added riders, blaming the magistrates for having licensed the theatre, and the architect for its serious structural defects.

The British steamer Romeo, from Liverpool to Rouen, went ashore on the French coast, thirteen persons being drowned.

22.—The result of the enquiry into the railway disaster at Hexthorpe, was a verdict of manslaughter against the driver and fireman of the express; but both were acquitted at the trial.

24.—At Mitchelstown, Mr. O'Brien, M.P., and Mr. Mandeville, sentenced to three and two months' imprisonment for having made speeches inciting to crime. Both released on bail pending their appeals.

on bail pending their appeals.

Fatal occurrence on the Franco-German frontier, a French shooting party, mistaken for poachers, having been fired upon from the German side, and a gamekeeper shot dead, and a French officer wounded.

27.—The first race for the American Cup, in New York Harbour, won by the American yacht Volunteer, beating the Scotch yacht Thistle by nineteen minutes.

 Alderman de Keyser elected Lord Mayor of London.

30.—In the second contest for the American Cup, the Volunteer was again victorious, the Americans thus retaining the trophy.

OCTOBER, 1887.

 Murder of the Rev. W. M. Farley, Vicar of Cettingham, in Suffolk, by his curate, who, at the trial, was found to be insane.

6.—At Balmoral, in presence of the Queen and the Empress Eugénie, the Prince of Wales unveiled the Jubilee Statue of Her Majesty, presented by her tenantry and servants.

A summons against the Lord Mayor of Dublin (who attended in full State), for an offence under the Crimes Act, dismissed, the magistrate holding that the charge had not been established; but he stated a case for a Superior Court.

 At Newmarket, the Cesarewitch won by Lord Rodney's Humewood, Bendigo and Carlton being second and third. Twentythree started.

12.—Death of George Fordham, the celebrated jockey, aged 50.

The valuable Middle Park Plate at Newmarket, for two-year-olds, easily won by Sir F. Johnstone's Friar's Balsam, only five starting, the smallest field since the race was instituted.

Mr. Chamberlain addressed a very large and enthusiastic meeting at Belfast on the "Maintenance of the Union."

The Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, licensed as a Music-hall, notwithstanding

very strenuous opposition, twelve learned

counsel appearing in the case.

-General Boulanger, Commander of the 13th Army Corps, and lately French Minister of War, placed under close arrest for thirty days, for insubordinate conduct and language, in connection with the "War Office Scandals."

The Metropolitan Board of Works decided to contribute £150,000 towards the purchase of land adjacent to Hampstead Heath, for its permanent enlargement.

17 .- Opening of Terry's Theatre, in the Strand. Serious rioting in Trafalgar Square, by large

mobs of the "Unemployed."

At Stratford-on-Avon, Mr. Henry Irving performed the ceremony of dedicating the handsome fountain, presented by Mr. Childs, of Philadelphia, to the town, in presence of the United States Minister and a distinguished company.

18-19.-Mr. Gladstone addressed large meetings at Nottingham, mostly on the

Question.

24.-Lord Hartington addressed an important meeting of the Unionist party at Nottingham, chiefly in reply to Mr. Gladstone's speeches of the previous week.

Princess Henry of Battenberg confined of a daughter at Balmoral, the first instance of a member of the Royal Family being born in Scotland since the year 1600.

25.-At Newmarket, the Cambridgeshire won by Gloriation, who beat Bendigo, Quicksand, and seventeen others.

30 .- Sudden death of Sir George Macfarren, the

eminent composer, aged 74.

31.—At Middleton, County Cork, the appeal of Messrs. O'Brien and Mandeville, against their conviction for offences under the Crimes Act, dismissed, and both lodged in gaol to undergo their sentences.

NOVEMBER, 1887.

3 .- In presence of the Prince of Wales, Truro Cathedral consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with great pomp and

9.-Lord Mayor's Show. At the Guildhall Banquet, Lord Salisbury made an important speech on the Foreign, Domestic, and Irish Policy of the Government.

10 .- The Irish Court of Exchequer decided that the magistrate was wrong in dismissing the charge against the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and remitted the case for rehearing.

The Liverpool Autumn Cup won by St. Mirin, beating Gay Hermit, Kilcreene,

and five others.

11 .- Four of the seven Chicago Anarchists, condemned for murder, executed in that city. Of the others, one committed suicide in gaol, and two had their sentences com-

muted to life imprisonment.

13.—Desperate rioting and conflict between the mob and police in Trafalgar Square and its neighbourhood, a strong military force being at last called out to clear the streets. A great number of persons, including several of the police, badly hurt and taken to hospitals, and many arrests effected.

16. - The steamer Wah Ysung destroyed by fire in Canton River, and 400 passengers reported to have perished.

Dense fog and very severe cold in London.

17.—By an almost unanimous vote—527 to 3—
the French Chamber of Deputies pronounced for the prosecution of M. Wilson, son-in-law of the President of the French Republic, on various grave charges in connection with the "Decoration Scandal."

Death of Colonel Valentine Baker (Baker Pasha) in Egypt.

Notice issued by the Commissioner of Police, prohibiting meetings in Trafalgar Square.

19 .- Visit of the Czar to the Emperor of Germany in Berlin.

Lord Lytton elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University by the casting vote of the Chancellor, Lord Rosebery being the other candidate.

Resignation of the French Ministry.

Disastrous collision, off Dover, between the British steamer Rosa Mary and the Dutch steamer W. A. Schloten from Rotterdam to New York, with emigrante, the latter being sunk with the loss of 130 lives.

21.—Barnum's Great Menagerie totally destroyed by fire at Bridgeport, Connecticut, very many of the animals perishing in the flames. Among them was "Alice," the elephant so long the great favourite of the juvenile visitors to our own famous collection in the Regent's Park. Estimated loss, £140,000.

23 .- At the Conference of the Conservative Union at Oxford, Lord Salisbury made an important political speech, and was presented with about 500 addresses from Conservative Associations from all parts of the kingdom.

25. Beach again defeated Hanlan on the Nepean River, New South Wales, for the Sculling

Championship of the World.

29.-Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen addressed an immense Unionist meeting in Dublin, and were received with great enthusiasm.

30.—Great Unionist banquet in Dublin, presided over by the Marquis of Hartington, at which Mr. Goschen was the principal speaker.

DECEMBER, 1887.

1.-Mr. Blundell Maple, Conservative, elected for Dulwich by a majority of 1,412. 2.—Resignation of M. Grévy, President of the

French Republic.

Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., Lord Mayor of Dublin, sentenced to two months' imprisonment, as a first-class misdemeanant, for offences under the Crimes Act.

M. Carnot elected President of the French Republic.

5 .- Death in London of Lord Lyons, for upwards of twenty years British Ambassador at Paris.

10 .- Opening of the Apprentices' Exhibition at the People's Palace, by the Prince of Wales, who delivered an address on the occasion.

Attempted assassination of M. Jules Ferry, in Paris.

- the international prize fight for the championship of the world, between 19.—The international for the English and American pugilists, Jem Smith and Jake Kilrain, took place near Rouen, in France, and resulted in a draw owing to darkness setting in, after a long and determined contest.
- 26. -Bank Holiday.
- 29 .- Total destruction of the Grand Theatre, Islington, by a fire which broke out shortly after the conclusion of the performance. Happily, no lives were lost.

JANUARY, 1888.

- 3.—Severe gales over the British Isles, and many shipping disasters, with loss of life, reported.
- The Theatre Royal, Bolton, totally destroyed by fire, under circumstances strongly pointing to wilful incendiarism. No loss of life.
- 9.—The remains of the late Emperor Napoleon and of his son, the Prince Imperial, removed from Chislehurst to a stately mausoleum at Farnborough, erected by the Empress Eugénie for their reception.
- 11-12.-Lord Salisbury enthusiastically received at Liverpool, where he delivered important speeches to large and representative
- 17.-Collision in the Irish Channel between the Dominion Line steamer Toronto, and a Norwegian barque, the latter being sunk, a: d only one of the crew saved.
- 18 .- Mr. John Cunningham Graham, M.P., and Mr. John Burns, convicted at the Old Bailey for participation in the Trafalgar Square rioting of last November, and each sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.
- 19 .- Death of the well-known and popular Sir Robert Carden, the Senior Alderman of London, and "Father of the Corporation," aged 86.
- 20.-Terrible fire in Houndsditch, four lives being lost, and five other persons more or less seriously injured.
- -Total eclipse of the moon, visible all over Europe.

FEBRUARY, 1838.

- Lord Ripon and Mr. John Morley were presented with the freedom of the City of Dublin, and afterwards addressed a great meeting in Leinster Hall, advocating Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Policy.
- 6.-Important speech by Prince Bismarck in the German Reichstag, in which he expressed his full confidence that the peace of Europe would not be disturbed in the near future.
- 7 .-- Robert Preston convicted at Manchester of having set fire to the Bolton Theatre on 4th January, and sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude. 9.—Meeting of Parliament.
- 13.-Championship race on the Thames between Wallace Ross of New Brunswick, and George Bubear, Champion of England; won by the former in 23 min. 16 sec.
- 28.—The race for the International two miles Professional Skating Championship at

- Amsterdam, won by James Smart in 6 min. 49 sec.; sixteen started; George See, the only other Englishman who competed, being second.
- The Deptford election, which had excited a good deal of interest, resulted in the return of the Conservative candidate, Mr. Darling, Q.C., by a majority of 275 over Mr. Wilfred Blunt, Gladstonian Liberal.

MARCH, 1883.

- 1.-M. Wilson, son-in-law of M. Grévy, late President of the French Republic, sentenced to two years' imprisonment, five years' subsequent deprivation of civil rights, and to pay a fine of £120, for "having received money for procuring to various persons the Cross of the Legion of Honour." Two other less prominent persons were also convicted and sentenced to minor penalties, all of whom exercising their right of appeal.
- The Waterloo Cup won by Mr. L. Pilkington's dog Burnaby, the runner up being Colonel North's Duke Macpherson.
- 7.—Sudden and alarming illness of the Emperor
- of Germany reported from Berlin. 9.—Death of the Emperor of Germany, aged 91 years. The announcement of the fatal termination of the illness of this great and venerable Monarch, though generally expected, was the cause of profound grief, not only in Berlin, and throughout Germany, but nearly over the whole civilised world.
 - Collision off Dungeness, between two large Glasgow ships, the Tasmania and the City of Corinth, the latter being sunk, and two only of her crew saved.
- 10.-Silver wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Owing to the death of the German Emperor, the celebration was comparatively quiet, but a grand banquet took place at Marlborough House, the Quaen and all the Royal Personages in London being present, and there were many presentations of magnificent gifts, and some brilliant illuminations at the West End.
 - Another so-called international prize fight between John L. Sullivan of Boston, United States, and Charles Mitchell, an English pugilist, took place at Creil, in France, and after a three hours' contest, ended, like the first, in a drawn battle.
- The Emperor Frederick, accompanied by the Empress Victoria, arrived in Berlin, having made the long journey from San Remo without apparent fatigue.
- 12-13-14.-A terrific snowstorm and gale of quite unprecedented violence, and described by the American newspapers as a "Blizzard," reported from New York as having caused enormous destruction of life and property, both on land and sea, and rendered traffic of every kind absolutely impossible during the considerable period of its duration.
- Marriage at Bournemouth of Prince Oscar of Sweden to Miss Munck, in presence of the Queen of Sweden, his sister, the Crown Princess of Denmark, the Duchess of Albany, and a distinguished assembly.

16.—Funeral of the Emperor of Germany. No such magnificent and imposing a ceremonial was ever before witnessed in Berlin, it having been attended by Royal or high and distinguished representatives from every country in Europe, and by a vast number of Ministers of State, Ambassadors, and other noble and eminent personages. The health of the Emperor Frederick prohibited him from taking part, and illness also prevented Prince Bismarck and Count Moltke from joining the funeral procession. Memorial Services were held at the same time at Windsor, in Westminster Abbey, and in nearly all the chief cities of Europe.

 In the House of Commons, Mr. Ritchie introduced the Local Government Bill for England and Wales.

20.—The Baquet Theatre at Oporto totally destroyed by a fire which broke out during the performance, and upwards of 120 of the audience reported to have perished in the terrible consequent panic.

 The Lincolnshire Handicap won by Mr. Legh's Veracity, who started at 50 to 1, and beat twenty-four followers.

The Queen, accompanied by Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg, left Windsor, en route to Florence, for a stay of some weeks.

23.—The Liverpool Grand National Steeplechase won by Mr. E. W. Baird's Playfair, an outsider, who beat Frigate, Ballot Box, and seventeen others. The Prince of Wales's Magic came in eighth.

24.—The Oxford and Cambridge annual Boat
Race on the Thames resulted in the very
easy victory of Cambridge, who led from
the start, and won anyhow by 6 lengths in
20 min. 48 secs.

26.—M. Wilson, son-in-law of the ex-President of the French Republic, who was sentenced on the 1st instant to two years' imprisonment and other penalties, for having "taken money to procure decorations," acquitted by the Court of Appeal, as were the two other persons convicted for complicity in the offence.

Great floods in Germany, owing to the overflowing of the rivers Elbe, Oder, and Vistula, considerable loss of life, enormous destruction of property, and great

distress being reported.

27.—Launch at Pembroke of the iron-clad
Nile, sister ship of the Trafalgar, these
great vessels being two of the heaviest
and most powerful war-ships in the world.

Opening of the new Putney Émbankment.
General Boulanger placed on the "Retired
List" of the French Army by the
President of the Republic, a Court Martial
having declared him guilty of various
military offences.

APRIL, 1888.

2.—Easter Monday. Notwithstanding somewhat unpropitious weather, an even unusually large number of Londoners availed themselves, in their customary manner, of the first Bank Holiday of the year. The Crystal Palace alone attracted the great gathering of over 65,000, while the various other places of amusement in the Metropolis were well attended.

6.—At Leicester, the Duke of Portland's horse,
Donovan, easily won the Portland Stakes of
£6,000 to the winner, the richest two-yearold prize ever competed for, El Dorado
and Your Grace being second and third
respectively. Twenty-five started.

7.—The Duke of Portland was again successful at the Leicester Meeting, his horse, Johnny Morgan, having won the Spring Handicap of £1,000, beating King Monmouth, Kinsky, and nine others.

 At Epsom, the City and Suburban won by Sir George Chetwynd's Fullerton, who beat Oliver Twist, Abu Klea, and eleven others.

15.—Very sudden death, in Liverpool, of Mr. Matthew Arnold, the well-known critic and accomplished man of letters, aged sixty-five years.

16.—Serious shipping disaster in the Channel, the British steamer Biela and the Belgian steamer Vena having been in collision, and the latter sunk, and fourteen of her crew and the pilot drowned.

18.—The second reading of the Bill to legalise marriage with a deceased's wife's sister carried in the House of Commons by a majority of fifty-seven.

The Marquis of Hartington presented with the freedom of the City at the Guildhall, and entertained at a banquet at the Mansion House.

19.—Terrible explosion at St. Helen's Colliery, near Workington, thirty of the thirty-five men in the pit at the time being destroyed.

23.—The Queen enter ained at luncheon by the Emperor of Austria, at Innsbrück, on her journey from Florence to Beriiu; this being the first occasion of Her Majesty having been in Austrian territory.

24.—Arrival of the Queen in Berlin, who met with a most cordial reception from all classes, and who immediately visited the invalid Emperor, whom she found better than he had been for some time.

25.—Reception of Prince von Bismarck, in private audience, by the Queen at Charlottenburg, the interview lasting more than half-an-hour. A great dinner party took place at the Palace in the evening.

26.—Lord Dunraven's Bill for the Reform of the House of Lords withdrawn, on the Prime Minister answering that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a measure to facilitate the entry of life peers into the House.

27.—Return home of the Queen, after a five weeks' stay on the Continent.

Announcement from Rome that the Pope, through the Holy Office, had explicitly condemned the Irish Plan of Campaign, and the practice of boycotting.

29.—Yet another disastrous collision in the Channel, this time between the steamer Moto and the sailing ship Smyrna, both British, whereby the latter was sunk, and her captain, pilot, and ten of the crew drowned.

MAY, 1888.

2.-At Newmarket, the race for the Two Thousand Guineas was a surprise, the favourite, Friar's Balsam, on whom 3 to 1 were laid, finishing last but one in the small field of six. The Duke of Portland's Ayrshire and Johnny Morgan were first and second, and the Duke of Westminster's Orbit third. Time, 1 min. 52 secs.

The One Thousand Guineas Stakes at Newmarket won by Mr. Baird's Briar-Root, who beat Scabreeze, the favourite, Belle Mahone, and eleven others, in the good

time of 1 min. 441 secs.

The Glasgow Exhibition opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

9 .-- The Chester Cup won by Kinsky in a field

The Prince and Princess of Wales visited Blackburn, where the Prince laid the foundation-stone of the new Technical School.

11.-The Kempton Park Grand Prize of 1,000 gaineas won by Crowberry, who beat eight others.

12 .- At Kempton Park, the "Grand Jubilee Stakes," value 3,000 guineas, one mile, won by Minting, who easily defeated Tyrone, The Cobbler, and others.

14.-The Anglo-Danish Exhibition opened by

the Princess of Wales.

15 .- At the Oval, the Surrey County Club sustained a most decisive defeat from the newly-arrived Australian Cricketers, who won by an innings and 154 runs.

17 .- The Newmarket Handicap won by Theo-

dore, in a field of nine.

18 .- The Princess of Wales opened the Royal Naval and Military Bazaar at the Hotel Métropole, when purses containing upwards of £5,000 were presented in aid of the funds of the Soldiers' and Sailors'

19.-Funeral at Portsmouth of Admiral Sir William Hewett, V.C., with considerable

pomp and full military honours. 20.-Opening of the Barcelona Exhibition by the Queen Regent of Spain; the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and Prince George

of Wales being among those present.
21.—Whit - Monday. Bank Holiday, favoured with really magnificent summer weather.

24.—Queen's Birthday. At Berlin, Prince Henry of Prussia, and Princess Irene of Hesse, were married in presence of the Emperor of Germany, and a great number of Royal and distinguished personages, which included the Prince of Wales, the uncle of both bride and bridegroom.

The remarkable feat of sculling in a small open pleasure boat from Dover to the French coast in thirteen hours, accomplished by a Mr. Osborne, of Tewkesbury.

25.—The Manchester Cup won by Merry Andrew in a field of nine, Selby and Scottish King being second and third.

27.—The French Derby, worth over £4,000, won

by M. Donon's Stuart, beating ten others. In the first day of the Epsom Summer Races, the Woodcote Stakes fell to Gold, seven others running.

30.-The Epsom Derby was won by the Duke of Portland's Ayrshire, who started "odds on," Crowberry and Van Dieman's Land coming in second and third. Time, 2 min. 43 secs. Only nine started. Very disastrous fire at Messrs. Garrould's, in

the Edgware Road, six of the female assistants losing their lives, and three others reviously injured.

31.-The Epsom Grand Prize won by Merry Andrew in a field of nine; and the Royal Stakes by Gervas, thirteen others com-

JUNE, 1888.

1.-At Epsom, the race for the Oaks won by Seabreeze, who beat Rada, Belle Mahone, and three others, in the fast time of 2 min. 42 4-5th secs.

At the Oval, the Australians decisively beaten by the Players of England, who

won by ten wickets.

4 .- Opening of the Irish Exhibition at Olympia, a numerous and distinguished company of all shades of political opinion being present.

5.-At Nottingham, the Australian Cricketers sustained another severe defeat, the county team winning by ten wickets.

7.—Opening of the Belgian Exhibition at Brussels by the King of the Belgians, in presence of a brilliant assemblage.

Centenary Festival of the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls, at the Albert Hall, under the presidency of the Prince of Wales, Grand Master of England, who was accompanied by the King of Sweden.

10 .- The Grand Prix of Paris easily won by M. Donon's Stuart, the English horse Crow-berry coming in second, and St. Gall third. Only six ran, the value of the race

to the winner being £5,771.

12 .- In the House of Commons, the important announcement was made that the Government had decided to abandon, for the present session, the Licensing Clauses of

the Local Government Acts.

At Ascot, the Prince of Wales's Stakes won by Ossory, eight others starting; the Ascot Stakes by Dan Dancer, in a field of ten; and the Gold Vase by Exmoor. Owing to very grave news from Berlin, as to the condition of the German Emperor, the Prince and Princess of Wales did not visit the course.

-The Royal Hunt Cup won by Shillelagh, Attila and Veracity being the two other

placed horses. Twenty-two ran.

The Ascot Gold Cup won by Timothy,
Tissapherne and Ténébreuse coming in
second and third. Rêve d'Or and Bird of Freedom made up the field.

15.-At Ascot, the Wokingham Stakes easily won by Annamite, who defeated twenty-four others; and the Hardwicke Stakes by Minting, only one other competing.

Death of Frederick the Third, Emperor of Germany, after a long period of illness and suffering. The sad, though not unexpected event, caused the deepest grief in Berlin and Germany, in this country, and, indeed, throughout Europe. His reign lasted only fourteen weeks.

- 18.—Funeral of the Emperor Frederick at Potsdam. Although not conducted upon the magnificent scale observed at the obsequies of his venerable predecessor, it was, nevertheless, a grand military pageant, and was attended by a numerous array of Royal and other distinguished personages, including the Prince and Princess of Wales, and their eldest son. Special funeral services were held at Balmoral, Windsor, and Westminster Abbey.
- 25.—In opening the German Reichstag, the new Emperor delivered an important and impressive speech, declaring his firm resolve to adhere to the pacific policy of his predecessors, as far as in him lay.
- Fifrieth Anniversary of the Coronation of the Queen.
 - The libel action brought by Charles Wood, the well-known jockey, against the Licensed Victuallers' Gazette, after a trial which lasted eight days, resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff with one farthing damages, and the Judge's refusal to allow costs.

JULY, 1888.

- 5.—The libel action, "O'Donnell v. the Times," with reference to its articles "Parnellism and Crime," resulted in an immediate verdict for the defendant.
 - Strike of about 1,500 women and girls employed at the match factory of Messrs. Bryant and May at Bow. After some days the dispute was settled, and work resumed.
- 6.—Mr. Parnell made a "personal explanation" in the House of Commons, in which he denounced the highly incriminating letters published in the Times, and bearing his signature, to be absolute forgeries.
 - Henley Regatta concluded, unfavourable weather having prevailed during the whole three days.
 - Terrible fire at De Beer's diamond mine at Kimberley, South Africa; Mr. Lindsay, the manager, and several hundreds of the men, chiefly natives, losing their lives.
- 13.—Determined duel at Paris between M.
 Floquet, the French Prime Minister, and
 General Boulanger, the latter being
 seriously wounded.
 - The "Old Times" ceach, driven by the well-known whip, James Selby, accomplished the journey from London to Brighton and back 108 miles in 7 hours and 50 minutes, a wager of £1,000 to £500 having been laid that it could not be done in 8 hours.
- 14.—The annual cricket match between Eton and Harrow resulted in the victory of the Harrovians by 156 runs; and at the Oval, the Players beat the Gentlemen by an innings and 36 runs.
 - The Cunard steamer Etruria arrived at Queenstown from New York in 6 days 4 hours and 50 minutes, the fastest eastern passage on record.
- 17.—At Lord's, nearly 20,000 persons witnessed the conclusion of the cricket match, England v. Australia, the latter winning by 61 runs.

- At Wimbledon, the shooting for the Queen's Prize of £250, with gold badge and medal, resulted in the victory of Private Fulton, Queen's Westminster, Corporal Noakes, 1st Berks, being only one point behind.
- 1st Berks, being only one point behind.
 19.—Meeting of the Emperors of Germany and Russia off Cronstadt, both monarchs afterwards landing in company at Peterhof.
 - Celebration at Plymouth of the three hundredth anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada.
 - At Wimbledon, the Elcho Challenge Cup won by Ireland; and the Asbburton Shield for Public Schools by Clifton College, sixteen other schools competing.
- 20.—Mr. Conybeare, Member for Cambourne, suspended from the service of the House for one month, for a "gross libel" upon the Speaker, in a letter written by him to the Star, and published in that paper.
 - The Kempton Park Grand Two-Year-Old Stakes won by Gay Hampton. Twelve started.
- 23-24-25.—At Leicester, the Zetland Plate, of £2,000, won by Seclusion in a field of eight; the Midland Derby Stakes, of £1,500, for three-year-olds, by Arrandale, beating ten others; and the Summer Handicap of £1,000 by King Monmouth, who defeated eight other horses.
- 26.—Arrival of the German Emperor at Stockholm on a visit to the King of Sweden.
- 27.—In the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown Park of £10,000 to the winner, and £500 to the second, the Duke of Westminster ran first and second with Orbit and Ossory, and Mr. Douglas third with Martley. Thirteen started.
- 28.—Professor Baldwin, a young American athlete, effected a safe descent at the Alexandra Palace from a balloon upwards of 1,000 feet above the ground by means of a parachute. Baldwin has repeated this performance many times since.
- 30.—Arrival at Copenhagen of the Emperor of Germany, on a visit to the King of Denmark.
- 31.—Extraordinary occurrence and great panic at Munich, owing to eight elephants, marching in a festive procession, taking fright and making a stampede through the streets. Four persons killed, and a great number of others seriously injured.

AUGUST, 1888.

- Opening of the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition with great pomp and ceremony, and in presence of a vast concourse of spectators.
- 1-2-3.—At Goodwood, the Sussex Stakes won by Zanzibar; the Gold Cup by Rada, who beat Osric, Timothy, and Exmoor; the Prince of Wales's Stakes by El Dorado; and the Goodwood Stakes by Stourhead, Clan Chattan and Fealty being second and third. Twelve started.
- 2.—George Galletley, aged 18, convicted at the Old Bailey of the wilful murder of Joseph Rumbold in the Regent's Park, and condemned to death; but afterwards reprieved. Seven other young roughs, also indicted, were acquitted on the capital

charge, pleaded guilty to minor offences, and were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

8.—Terrible explosion at the firework factory of Messrs. Cadwell and Co., at Wandsworth, two girls being instantaneously killed, another dying shortly after, and the fourth dreadfully injured.

Destructive volcanic eruption in one of the Lipari Islands; immense damage stated to have been occasioned.

 The lugger Seagull sunk off Scarborough in a terrible gale, her crew, nine in number, being all drowned.

Death of General Sheridan, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army, at his home in Massachusetts, aged 57 years.

6.—Immense Unionist meeting at Eridge Park, near Tunbridge Wells, at which Mr. A. J. Balfour, the Irish Secretary and principal speaker, was presented with nearly 400 addresses from Conservative and Unionist Associations in Kent and Sussex.

Bank Holiday. Despite somewhat unfavourable weather, the August Holiday did not lack its usual vast crowds of excursionists and sightseers.

Disastrous collision about midnight on the South-Western Railway at Hampton Wick, resulting in the death of four persons, two passengers, and the driver and fireman of one of the engines. Many other passengers were most seriously injured.

8.—Banquet to Her Majesty's Ministers at the Mansion House. Ten members of the Cabinet were present, including Lord Salisbury, who made the political speech usual on the occasion.

In the House of Commons, the Parnell Commission Bill read a third time, and carried by a majority of 116.

Serious disturbances in Paris during a Communist funeral; the police and military in collision with armed mobs, many of whom were arrested and several badly hurt.

10.—In the cricket match at the Oval between Surrey and Sussex, the former made 698 runs in their first innings, the best on record in a first-class match.

11.—At Leicester the Twenty-mile Cycling Match for the Championship of the World between R. Howell and W. Wood, won by the former in 1 hour and 49 secs.

Terrible disaster at Valparaiso, owing to the bursting of a large reservoir. Nearly a hundred houses destroyed, and over two hundred persons drowned.

13.—In the House of Lords the Royal Assent given to the Local Government Bill, the Imperial and National Defence Bill, the Parnell Commission Bill, and to other measures.

The House of Commons adjourned to Noyember 6th for an autumn session. Mr. Parnell commenced an action in the Scottish Courts at Edinburgh against the Times, claiming £50,000 damages for libels contained in its well-known articles, "Parnellism and Crime."

 News from Rome to the effect that the Italian troops had suffered a severe defeat on the borders of Abyssinia.

In the competition with the 40-pounder breech-loading Armstrong Gun at Shoeburyness, the first prize won by the Fifth Detachment of the Third Kent Artillery.

Resignation by Count von Moltke of his high position as Chief of the Staff of the German army, accepted by the Emperor

with great regret.
Disastrous collision in the North Atlantic,
between the Danish steamers Thingvalla
and Geiser, the latter being sunk, and
105 of her passengers and crew drowned.
The Thingvalla, after transferring passengers to another steamer, arrived safely
at Halifax.

15.—Mr. Justice Hannen, Mr. Justice Day, and Mr. Justice Smith, the judges appointed to investigate the charges made in the Times articles headed "Parnellism and Crime," fixed 17th September for their first sitting.

22.—Visit of the Queen to Glasgow. She opened the new Municipal Buildings, and then made a State visit to the Industrial Exhibition, where she was received with immense enthusiasm.

 Visit of the Queen to Paisley; and of the Princess Beatrice to Govan, who launched the new war-ship, Marathon.

25.—At the Crystal Palace, the cricket match between the Australians and an eleven of England resulted in the Colonists being beaten by 78 runs; this being their fifth successive defeat.

 Very disastrous fire in Hamburg, attended by considerable loss of life and enormous destruction of property.

27.—In the descent near Witham, in Essex, of the balloon which had ascended from Olympia an hour or two before, a terrible accident occurred, by which Mr. Simmonds, the well-known aeronaut, was killed, and one of his two companions very seriously hurt, the other escaping with slight injury. This was the veteran's 495th ascent.

29.—At York, the Great Ebor Handicap won by Nappa, an outsider, in a field of thirteen; and the Prince of Wales's Stakes by Nunthorpe, who beat six others.

31.—At Manchester, the deciding match between the Australian cricketers and an eleven of England, won by the English players in one innings, and with twenty-one runs to space.

OBITUARY FOR 1887-1888.

On the 1st September, 1887, died EMMA JANE WORBOISE (Mrs. Etherington Guyton), a wellknown contributor to religious publications, and editor of the Christian World Magazine.

The 2nd September was marked by the death of Gustave L. M. Strauss, the author of "Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," and one of the founders of the "Savage Club." He was born about the year 1807, in Canada, took the degree of Ph.D. at the University of Berlin, served as assistant surgeon in the French army, and came to settle in London in 1839. As author, magazine writer, journalist, dramatist, critic, nothing came amiss to his energy and versatility. He edited the Grocer, he wrote for the comic journals, and to the last was a striking and original figure in the world of letters. In 1879 he was admitted to Charterhouse, and became an out-pensioner of that foundation; but neither age nor adversity had power to daunt his indomitable spirit.

SIE CHARLES YOUNG, Bart. and dramatist, the author of "Shadows and Charms," and "Jim the Penman," was born in 1839, and died 11th September, 1887.

Early in October was reported the death of LADY BRASSEY, at sea, between Australia and the Mauritius, on board Lord Brassey's yacht, the Sunbeam, the "Voyages" of which she had chronicled with so much success.

George Fordham, the celebrated jockey, died 12th October, 1887, in his fifty-first year. He scored his first win in 1851; won the Cambridgeshire in 1853, and subsequently became the most successful jockey of his day. Through all his career he maintained a character of strict integrity.

MRS. CRAIK—Dinah Maria Mulock—was born at Stoke, in 1826. Her first novel, "The Ogilvies," was published in 1849, and "John Halifax," the work which made her reputation, in 1857. The last novel she wrote, "King Arthur," appeared in the year 1886. Mrs. Craik died at Shortlands, Kent, on the 12th October, 1887.

The RIGHT HON. A. J. B. BERESPORD-HOPE died on the 20th October. He was the youngest son of "Anastasius" Hope, and was born 1820. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity, Camb, where he graduated in 1841. Mr. Hope was a voluminous writer on ecclesiastical questions.

The head-master of Uppingham School, Da. Theine, was born 29th October, 1821, and was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge. After some experience in private tuition he was elected to Uppingham in 1853. He raised the school to a remarkable pitch of efficiency, and carried out his own system of thorough education with very great success. Dr. Thring died October 22nd, 1887.

SIR GEORGE MACFARREN, Mus. Doc., was born 2nd March, 18.3. He was educated at the Royal Academy of Music, and eventually succeeded Sir Sterndale Bennett as Principal of that institution. He was chosen Professor of Music at Cambridge, in 1875, and was knighted by the Queen in 1883. His compositions embrace Oratorios, Operas, Operettas, Overtures, Symphonies, Sonatas, tuneful songs and effective church music. His lectures on music and biographics of musicians were also of considerable value. Sir George died on the 30th October.

The death of Jenny Lind, Madame Goldschmidt, on the 2nd November, at Malvern, recalled to the public mind her ancient fame as the "Swedish Nightingale." Madame Goldschmidt was born at Stockholm on the 6th October, 1821.

BAKER PASHA, who as Valentine Baker ruined a promising career in the British army, was born in 1825, and entered the army in 1848. He served in the Kaffir War and in the Crimea, and was Lieut.-Colonel of the 10th Hussars from 1860 to 1873. He then devoted himself to travel and exploration on the Russian frontier, in Persia, and Afghanistan, and embodied the results of his observations in a volume entitled "Clouds in the East." In 1874 he was appointed Assistant Quartermaster - General; but in the following year he was removed from the service. In 1877 Colonel Baker began his career in the Turkish army, and served with distinction in the Russo-Turkish War. He was chosen to organise the gendarmerie in Egypt, and, after the defeat and destruction of Hicks Pasha and the Egyptian army, he essayed the relief of Tokar with a native force, which, however, broke and fled at the first attack of the Arabs. Valentine Baker died on 17th November, at Cairo.

LORD LYONS, a noted diplomatist, was born 1817, and succeeded his father, the Admiral of Crimean fame, in 1858. He had embraced a diplomatic career from the first, and passing through the various grades of the service, he became Ambrisador at Washington, and subsequently at Constantinople. He was transferred to Paris in 1867, and remained at the Embassy till his retirement, shortly before his death, which occurred at Norfolk House, London, on the 5th December.

PROFESSOR BALFOUR STEWART, who died December, 1887, was born 1st November, 1828, at Edinburgh. Eventually he was appointed director of Kew Observatory, and his scientific reputation led to his appointment, in 1859, as Professor of Natural Philosophy at Owens College, Manchester. He was the author of many scientific treatises and papers.

A novelist of considerable power and promise was lost by the death of Miss Margaret Veley, on the 7th December, 1887. Her most successful novel, "For Percival," ensured her a considerable circle of readers. Miss Veley was born 12th May, 1843.

A veteran actor, Mr. W. H. Chippendale, died, aged 88 years, on the 3rd January, 1888. He made his first début in London in 1853, at the

Haymarket, and for many years represented the high comedy of the old school at that theatre with general appreciation. Mr. Chippendale also appeared as Polonius in Mr. Irving's revival of "Hamlet" at the Lyceum. He took his farewell of the stage as long ago as 1879.

PROFESSOR BONAMY PRICE was born at Guernsey in 1807, and graduated at Worcester College, Oxford. He was chosen Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, and was the author of many pamphlets and articles on currency and kindred topics, on which his opinions were generally bold and unconventional. He died 8th January, 1888.

SIE ROBERT CARDEN, Lord Mayor in 1857-8, an eminent stockbroker and active City magistrate, died on the 19th January.

An eminent legist is lost to us by the death of SIR HENRY J. S. MAINE, who was born 1822, and graduated from Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1844, after a brilliant academical career. In 1862 he was appointed Member of the Supreme Council of India, and remained in that country till 1869. Sir Heary has written much and well on early laws, customs, and institutions. He died 4th February, 1888, at Cannes, in France.

EDMUND LEAR, artist and humorist, author of the "Book of Nonsense," and of sundry journals of travels and sketching tours, was born near Knowsley in Lancashire, and was first employed by the zoological Earl of Derby to paint animals and natural objects, and, showing great artistic talent, was sent by the Stanley family to Italy and Greece, the scenery of which classic regions occupied his pencil for many years. From 1850 to 1873 he was a constant exhibitor at the Academy. Mr. Lear died early in February, at San Remo.

On the 9th March died the EMPEROR WILLIAM of GERMANN, who was born on the 22nd March, 1797, and had served, as a youth, in the campaigns of 1812-15 against the great Napoleon. In 1858 he became Regent of Prussia, and succeeded to the crown in 1861. On the 18th January, 1871, William was proclaimed the first Emperor of Germany.

MATTHEW ARNOLD was born in 1822, and was the son of the afterwards celebrated head-master of Rugby. He was educated at Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford, and graduated in honours in 1844, and was chosen Fellow of Oriel in 1845. As a poet, essayist, and critic, Arnold achieved high distinction in the world of culture. He was also useful and popular as an Inspector of Schools. He died suddenly on the 15th April.

On the 10th June died COLONEL KING-HARMAN, who had recently come into Parliamentary notice as Under-Secretary for Ireland.

The 15th June was marked by the death of the EMPEROR FREDERICK WILLIAM, whose short and sorrowful reign was thus brought to an untimely end. As Crown Prince he had won abundant honour as a soldier, both in the Austrian and French wars. But it was upon the peaceful development and improvement of the national life that his heart was chiefly set, and his death must be regarded as a serious loss to the cause of human progress.

On the 9th July died the Rev. J. R. GLEIG, well known to the youth of the country for his

capital books of adventure, and who, "dans son vivant," was Chaplain-General to the Forces. He was born 1796, and served as a subaltern in the Peninsular War, and in the expedition against Washington. He afterwards took orders, and held preferment in the Church.

On the 31st July died Mr. Frank Holl, R.A. He was born on the 4th July, 1845, and first exhibited at the Academy in 1864. Although successful as a genre painter, Mr. Holl was far stronger in portraiture, and of late years devoted himself entirely to that branch of art, and he has executed fine and characteristic portraits of many of the chief men of the day. Mr. Holl was elected R.A. in 1883.

GENERAL PHILIP SHERIDAN, the great cavalry leader of the Northern armies in the American Civil War, died on the 5th August.

Other deaths during the period under notice must be briefly enumerated. Literature has been deprived of a veteran follower in the person of Mrs. Mary Howitt, author of "Wood Leighton," a novel, of many books for children, and the translator of many works from the German. To the same profession belonged Miss L. M. Alcorr, born in Pennsylvania, in 1833, and well known on this side of the Atlantic for her "Little Women' and "Little Men." MISS HARWOOD, too, is gone, who, as "Ross Neil," was a successful writer of fiction and verse. The dramatic world has lost sundry veteran members :- MRS. CHIPPENDALE, who died 26th May, 1888, and who first appeared in London at the Haymarket as Miss Snowdon, in 1863, and who has recently played at the Lyceum. Mr. CRESWICK, who died 17th June, 1888, in his seventy-fifth year, one of Phelps' old Sadlers' Wells Company, who took his farewell of the stage in 1885, at Drury Lane. Two other noted actors have departed in the full height of their powers: Mr. J. CLAYTON, who recently en-livened the town at the Court Theatre, and Mr. W. J. HILL, who delighted everybody in his part in "The Private Secretary." Among the dramatic veterans who have departed may be noted also MR. T. GERMAN REED, the originator of the successful entertainment that bears his name. And MRS. SHEBIDAN KNOWLES, who died in her eightyfirst year, recalls the memory of her husband's dramas, in some of which she appeared fifty years ago as Miss Elphinstone, at the Haymarket. The publishing world has lost Mr. ROBERT CHAMBERS, the son and successor of Dr. Robert Chambers, of the well-known Edinburgh firm; MR. WILLIAM NELSON, also of Edinburgh; and MR. JOHN HEYWOOD, of Manchester. Among clergymen we have to regret the late A. H. MACHONOCHIE, twenty years vicar of St. Alban's, Holborn, who perished during a snowstorm in a Highland forest; Canon TREVOR, born in 1809, an active cleric of the Northern province and the author of many useful historical manuals published by the Religious Tract Society. the DEAN BURGON of Chichester, a well-known figure at Oxford. Medicine and sanitary science have lost a distinguished representative in Dr. ARTHUE FARRE. SIR JOHN ROSE, ex-Canadian Prime Minister, and a noted Bank Director and financier, Mr. HENRY RICHARD, M.P., the well-known Member for Wales, and M. GUSTAVE Masson, the veteran French Professor of Harrow, are among the most recent additions to the death

NOTES OF THE YEAR

THE autumn of the year 1887 found the world of English society a little languid, after the protracted festivities of the Queen's Jubilee and of a brilliant London Winter came, early and gloomily, with severe cold in November. There was a general lack of employment, with serious suffering, and general uneasiness was increased by popular demonstrations and collisions between police and people. And although the winter that followed was not exceptionally severe, yet it lasted long, and was succeeded by such a wet and dreary season that trade, and any indications of reviving prosperity, were severely checked. To the wet summer has succeeded a gusty, tempestuous harvest month, and the already depressed agricultural interest is likely still further to suffer.

With the cold winds of March, 1888, came the news of the death of the German Emperor William, and then of the sad accession of his foredoomed son, of whose wisdom and high humanity such hopes had been entertained, but whose short reign was but a continued martyrdom. A young and untried Prince ascended the throne, and his influence upon European affairs is still a subject for conjecture.

In France there have been strange movements and popular manifestations, of which General Boulanger has been the hero, and a curious spectacle has been presented in a duel fought with something like ferocity between the French Prime Minister and the military aspirant to popular favour, who may or may not represent La Revanche. For the rest, the condition of the working population is, in France also, one of the burning questions of the hour. There have been strikes both numerous and embittered, and the growing discontent of the proletariat with existing social conditions is not without its dangers.

Italy, seeking adventures abroad, has reaped little profit or glory, any more than we have, on the coast of the Red Sea, and her relations with France have been as little cordial as possible. On the other hand,

her entente with Prince Bismarck and the Germans seems closer than ever.

Russia gloomily watches her opportunity and makes her preparations, while her internal condition is full of hidden sores, and her finances are failing under the strein.

Thus the tension of affairs on the Continent still continues. And the possibility of the sudden outbreak of a general war—although perhaps lessened by every year of peace—is yet far from being averted. The periodic scare as to our national defences, which is the result of an uneasy feeling of unpreparedness on the part of the nation, revives, and is lulled to rest; but the question still remains—does our enormous expenditure on naval and military heads, afford us any satisfactory result in national security?

The question whether our naval supremacy is still to be relied upon, to preserve our shores from aggression, is somewhat disagreeably elucidated by the result of the recent naval manœuvres. shown to be almost impossible to blockade an enemy's ports so as to prevent the escape of swift cruisers; and the very existence of our enormous and costly armoured ships is threatened by the developement of torpedo warfare. active enemy, having eluded our blockade, might easily destroy every unprotected town on our vast seaboard; and the suggestion that the alternative would be offered of a heavy ransom, is not of an exhilarating character. Our fleet must then be massed to protect the vital parts of the empire, while our enemies might work their will in the destruction of our mercantile marine, and in paralysing our commerce. And should any disaster occur to that protecting fleet, and the Channel be left open to an enemy's transportswhat are our means of meeting an invader ?

Those who know the condition of our regular army the best, are the least sanguine of its success. It is good as far

as it goes; but there is so little of it. home we have skeleton battalions, depleted by the necessities of Indian and Colonial service, and whose ranks would be exhausted in supplying an army corps of thirty thousand men. And then we have paper brigades of volunteers. Still, that is a step in the right direction, for even a mere pen-and-ink organisation is better But in the volunteers than none at all. themselves we have a substantial and satisfactory entity. There are the men, plenty of them, mostly young, and of good physique, and behind these, numbers who have passed through the ranks and retired, but who would mostly enroll themselves as a reserve if they were ever encouraged to do so.

And here we have large bodies of men, eagerly asking to be organised, to be made efficient as regiments by the supply of proper stores and equipments; to be occasionally in brigades and divisions, and take and keep their places in a thoroughly equipped "army of defence." It is not suggested that these demands meet with no attention. But the progress is slower than might be, and in some directions there is no sufficient effort to clear away the obstacles to the volunteer's efficiency. While higher tests of marksmanship are imposed, for instance, on one side, on the other he is left to scramble for such ranges as may be open to him, and has to prove himself efficient in the face of much unnecessary trouble and loss of time. The question of ranges is an important one, and power should be given to secure them in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and of the large commercial towns.

The future of the artillery of the volunteer force, too, would be encouraging were it adequately supplied with guns—not of an obsolete pattern and material. The experience of the American war showed how quickly, given the men and guns, efficient artillerymen can be produced. And in the way of horses, both for artillery and transport, what boundless resources are not furnished in the streets of London, and other large towns! Some tentative means have already been taken by means of a voluntary registration of horses available for Government purposes in time of national danger.

It is cheering, too, to have to note some progress in the enrolment of our sea-

faring population for coast defence. Submarine mining and torpedo work is also being taught at certain points, and it must be remembered that the resources of defensive warfare are greatly increased by modern inventions under these heads.

Pity it is that our resources in the way of the best horses and the best horsemen in the world, should be so little utilised. Our experience at the Cape shows how readily an effective force, like Methuen's Horse, could be raised in our country districts, and how easily could our squires and great nobles make such an

imaginary force a reality.

In the matter of legislation, the year has considerable results to show. Local Government Bill, which all parties have united to pass, works a peaceful revolution in our system of County Govern-The country squire may be said to have been disestablished, although it is probable that for a time, at all events, the composition of the new County Councils will not differ very widely from that of the Courts of Quarter Sessions which have hitherto held sway. But the new "Local Parliaments," as an active and living force, will no doubt acquire fresh functions and increased power on every side. The next stepadmittedly only deferred—is to institute district councils, and parish councils must logically follow. In all this we are only reverting to the system of early times when tithing, hundred, and shire, mustered their freemen in council at every emergency

Of foreign travel and adventure there is little to record. Henry Stanley's fate, in the wilds of the Dark Continent, is still uncertain. Some have hoped that he may yet burst, meteor-like, on the Dervishes of Khartoum, rescue the European prisoners languishing there, and revenge the fate of Gordon. Is he the White Pasha? Who can tell? But fear outweighs hope.

Crossing the Atlantic we find the Americans in the throes of a Presidential election, and somewhat excited by their own rejection, at the hands of the Senate, of the Fishery Treaty with Canada. It is a troublesome affair—fishery questions always are—and fishery squabbles are unceasing, whether alongside a trout stream, on the Dogger bank or along the American coast. But it is hardly likely that the friendly relations of the two countries will be seriously disturbed.

CALENDAR FOR 1889.

JANUARY.

1	T	Circumcision. Total eclipse of Sun, inv. at
2 3 4 5	W	Prof. James Stewart born, 1843. [Grnwch.
3	Th	Warspite burnt, 1376.
4	F	Isaac Pitman born, 1813.
5	8 M	Capture of Honore, Bombay, 1783.
6 7 8	S.	Epiphany, Twelfth Day,
7	M	Earl of Kimberley born, 1826.
8	T	Alma Tadema born, 1836.
9	W	Sir Rupert A. Kettle born, 1817.
10	Th	Sir Ford North born, 1830.
11	F	Rome evacuated by the French, 1868.
12	8 5 M	Wm. Pengelly born, 1812.
13	5	1st Sunday after Epiphany.
1-6	M	Plough Monday.
15	T	Francis G. Heath born, 1843.
16	W	St. Marcellus,
17	Th	Partial eclipse of Moon, partly visible at
18		Wm. Hy. Overall born, 1829. [Greenwich.
19	F 8 5 M	Chas. P. Villiers born, 1802.
20	5	2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
21	M	Oscar, King of Sweden, born, 1829.
22	T	Bishop Wilberforce born, 1840,
13	W	John R. Herbert born, 1810.
13 24 25	Th	Lord Robert Montague born, 1825,
25	F	Conversion of St. Paul.
26	8	St. Polycarp.
17	S	3rd Sunday after Epiphany. Emp. William
18	S	Robert H. Scott born, 1833. [II. born, 1859.
19	T	John C. Horsley, R.A., born, 1817.
10	W	John Forbes-Robertson born, 1822.
31	Th	Ashantees defeated by Wolseley, 1874.

Moon's Prises

1st.	New Moon	 9h.	911	Afternoon,
9th.	First Quarter	 0	40	Morning.
17th.	Full Moon	 5	37	Morning.
24th.	Last Quarter	 3	57	Afternoon.

FEBRUARY.

1	F	Partridge and Pheasant Shooting ends.
	F S M	Purification, Candlemas Day.
8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	8	4th Sun, aft, Epiphany. Marq. of Salisbury
	M	Fred. Jas. Furnivall born, 1825. [born, 1e30.
	T	D. L. Moody born, 1837.
1	w	St. Titus. Henry Irving born, 1838.
	Th	Charles Dickens born, 1812; died, 9th June,
1		Jules Verne born, 1828. [1870.
)	8	St. Cyril of Alexandria.
)	8	5th Sunday after Epiphany.
	FSM	Archbishop Thomson born, 1819.
1	T	B. Disraeli took his seat in House of Lords,
3	W	Cardinal Howard born, 1829. [1877.
	Th	St. Valentine.
		Mrs, Cashel Hoey born, 1833.
	F S M	Amboyna capitulated to English, 1796.
	S	Septuagesima Sunday,
	M	Wilson Barrett born, 1846,
	T	Lord Lingen born, 1819.
	W	Leo XIII. elected Pope, 1878.
i	Th	Henry Wallis (Artist) born, 1830.
	F	Jas. Russell Lowell born, 1819.
3	FSSMT	Samuel Pepys born, 1632. [and Martyr.
	S	Sexagesima Sunday. St. Matthias, Apostle
5	M	Drury Lane Theatre burnt, 1809.
	T	Rev. Jno. P. Mahaffy born, 1839.
	W	Richard Garnett born, 1835.
	Th	Sir R. Rawlinson born, 1810,

Moon's PHASES.

7th.	First Quarter	 8h.	58m.	Afternoon.
18th.	Full Moon	 10	17	Afternoon.
22nd.	Last Quarter	 11	55	Afternoon.

MARCH.

	1	
1	F	St. David.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	FSSA	St. Chad. Marie Roze born, 1850.
3	5	Quinquagesima Sunday.
4	M	Percy B. St. John born, 1821.
5	T	Shrove Tuesday.
6	W	Ash Wednesday,
7	Th	12,000 Ashantees invaded British territory.
8		St. Felix. [1973.
9	8	Emperor William died, 1888.
10	F S M	1st Sunday in Lent. Quadragesima.
11	M	Earthquake in China, 1876.
12	T	Benj. Williams Leader, A.R.A., born, 1831.
13	W	Aug. J. C. Hare born, 1834.
14	Th	Humbert, King of Italy, born, 1844.
15	10	Mrs. Kendal born, 1849.
16	S	Gustavus III. of Sweden assassinated, 1792.
17	S	2nd Sunday in Lent. St. Patrick's Day.
18	M	Princess Louise of Lorne born, 1848.
19	T	Sir Travers Twiss born, 1809.
20	W	Edward Poynter, R.A., born, 1836,
21	Th	St. Benedict.
23	F	Rosa Bonheur born, 1822.
23	8	Richard A. Proctor born, 1837.
24	F S M	3rd Sunday in Lent.
25	M	Annunciation. Lady Day.
26	T	Duke of Cambridge born, 1819.
27	W	Sir George J. Elvey born, 1816.
28	Th	War with Russia, 1854.
29	F	Albert Hall opened, 1871.
80	8	Don Carlos born, 1848.
31	S	4th Sunday in Lent.

Moon's PHASES.

1st.	New Moon	 10%.	1m.	Afternoon.
9th.	First Quarter	 5	59	Afternoon.
17th.	Full Moon	 11	47	Morning.
24th.	Last Quarter	 6	54	Morning.
31st.	New Moon	 11	37	Morning.

APRIL

	M	Karl Otto von Bismarck born, 1815.
	W	Emile Zola born, 1840.
	Th	St. Richard.
1		St. Ambrose,
ı	F S M	Alg. Charles Swinburne born, 1837.
1	2	St. Isidore.
	2	5th Sunday in Lent.
-	T	King John of France d. in the Savoy, 1364. Adelina Patti born, 1813.
	w	William Booth, Salvationist, born, 1829.
-	Th	Napoleon I. abdicated, 1814.
-		St. Loo.
1	8	David Christie Murray born, 1847.
- 1	S	Palm Sunday, Pr. Beatrice of Battenberg
- 1	F 8 M	First Prince of Wales born, 1284. [b., 1857.
-1	T	Earl of Lucan born, 1800,
- 1	W	Wreck of Tasmania, 1887.
- [Th	Irish Crimes Bill passed Commons, 1887.
- 1	F	Good Friday, Primrose Day.
- 1	8	Admiral Blake's victory at Santa Cruz, 1657.
- 1	S M T	Easter Sunday.
- 1	M	Baster Monday. Bank Holiday.
	T	St. George. James A. Froude born, 1819.
-1	W	Louis XVIII. returned to France, 1814.
-	Th	St. Mark, Evangelist and Martyr.
	8 8	Thomas H. S. Escott born, 1844.
-	8	General Sir E. B. Hamley born, 1927.
	5	1st Sunday after Easter. Low Sunday.
	M.	Lord Brahourne born, 1829.

MOON'S PRISES.

8th.	First Quarter		14.	47m.	Afternoon.
15th.	Full Moon	**	10		Afternoon.
22nd. 30th.	Last Quarter New Moon	**	2		Morning.

MAY.

Duke of Connaught born, 1850. The Thames Embankment opened, 1863. F. Columbus discovered Jamaica, 1495. S. Thos. Hy. Huxley born, 1825. S. Thos. Hy. Huxley born, 1825. T. Bobert Browning born, 1832. T. Bobert Browning born, 1812. Bonaparte landed at Elba, 1814. The Chelesa Embankment opened, 1874. St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1815. S. The St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1815. S. The St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1815. S. The St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1815. S. The St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1815. S. The St. Antoninus. S. Earl Granville born, 1842. Edwin Bay Lancaster born, 1842. Edwin Bay Lancaster born, 1836. S. Alphonse Daudet born, 1849. S. Horace Jones born, 1849. S. Horace Jones born, 1819. T. Sir Lyon Playfair born, 1819. T. Horace Jones born, 1819. Frincess Christian born, 1846. Regation Sunday. Princess Christian born, 1846. T. James Heywood bern, 1810. T. James Heywood born, 1810. T. James Heywood born, 1810. T. Lord Chelmsford born, 1827.

Moon's Phases.

8th.	First Quarter	 6h.	42m	. Morning.
15th.	Full Moon	 6	42	Morning.
21st.	Last Quarter	 9	53	Afternoon.
29th.	New Moon	 5	20	Afternoon.

JULY.

,	м	Orby Shipley born, 1832.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	T	Arthur Locker born, 1828,
3	w	End of Afghan War, 1879.
4	Th	Garibaldi born, 1807; died, 1892.
6	F	Phineas Taylor Barnum born, 1810.
6	8	Jas. Edgar Boehm born, 1834.
7	S	3rd Sunday after Trinity.
8	8 8 M	Mrs. Alfred Mellon born, 1824,
9	T	Thos. Hayter Lewis born, 1818.
10	W	Captain Marryat born, 1792.
11	Th	Henry Buxton Forman born, 1842.
12		Partial eclipse of Moon, partly visible a
13	F S M T W	Gustave Freytag born, 1816. [Greenwich
14	S	4th Sunday after Trinity.
15	M	W. Wilson Hunter born, 1840,
16	T	Holt S. Hallett born, 1841.
17	W	First Number of Punch published, 1841.
18	Th	William G. Grace born, 1848.
19	8 8 M	Alfred Waterhouse born, 1839.
20	8	Clements R. Markham born, 1830.
21	S	5th Sunday after Trinity.
22	M	St. Mary Magdalen.
23	W	Marquis of Hartington born, 1833.
24	W	Window Tax repealed, 1851.
25	Th	St. James, Apostle and Martyr.
26	F	St. Anne.
27	8	E. O. Ford (Sculptor) born, 1852.
28	FSM	6th Sun. after Trin. Mary Anderson born
29		Bank of England incorporated, 1694. [1359
30	T	General von Blümenthai born, 1810.
31	W	Paul Du Chaidu born, 1835.

Moon's PHASES.

6th,	First Quarter	 5h.	59m.	Morning.	
12th.	Full Moon	 9	2	Afternoon.	
19th.	Last Quarter	 7	45	Afternoun.	
28.h.	New Moon	 0	1	Morning.	

JUNE.

1	1 13	Napoleon quitted Elba, 1815,
2	S	Sunday after Ascension.
3	S M T	David Jefferson born, 1809.
4	T	General Lord Wolseley born, 1833.
6	W	St. Boniface.
6	Th	Jean B. L. Say born, 1826.
7	F	Empress Charlette of Mexico born, 1840.
6 7 8 9	F 8 8	Sir Philip Owen Cunliffe born, 1828,
9	8	Whit Sunday,
10	M	Whit Monday, Bank Holiday.
11	T	St. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr,
13	W	Charles Kingsley born, 1819,
13	Th	Duc de Broglie born, 1821,
14		E. H. Sloper (Pianist) born, 1826.
15	F S M	Emperor Frederick of Germany died, 1888.
16	8	Trinity Sunday.
17	M	Chas. F. Gounod born, 1818.
18	T	Henry D. Leslie born, 1822,
19	w	C. H. Spurgeon born, 1834.
20	Th	Corpus Christi, Access of Queen Victoria,
21		Proclamation. [1837.
22	F 8 8	Henry Rider Haggard born, 1856.
23	8	
24	8	1st Sunday after Trinity.
25	T	St. John Baptist. Midsummer Day.
26	w	South Kensington Museum opened, 1855.
27	Th	Ss. John and Paul.
28	F	Dr. Dodd executed, 1777.
29	E C	Coronation Day. Ann. eclip. of Sun, inv. at
30	8	St. Peter, Apostle and Martyr. [Greenwich.
00	0	2nd Sunday after Trinity.

Moon's PHASES.

6th.	First Quarter	 8h.	2m.	Afternoon.
20th.	Last Quarter	 7		Morning.
28th.	New Moon	 В	54	Morning.

AUGUST.

1	Th	H. M. Marshall (Artist) born, 1841.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Te.	Battle of Sedan, 1870.
3	8	Sir Henry T. Holland born, 1825.
4	S	7th Sunday after Trinity.
5	8	Bank Holiday.
6	T	Duke of Edinburgh born, 1844.
7	W	Archdeacon Farrar born, 1831.
8	Th	Sir A. Otway born, 1822.
9	F	St. Oswald.
10	8 S M	Massacre of Swiss Guards at Tuileries, 1793.
11	S	8th Sunday after Trinity.
12	M	Grouse Shooting begins.
13	T	Philip Bourke Marston born, 1850.
14	W	Briton Rivière born, 1840.
15	Th	Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary,
16	F 8 8 M	Battle of Gravelotte, 1870.
17	8	Eureka (Nevada) destroyed by fire, 1880.
18	S	9th Sunday after Trinity.
19	M	James Nasmyth born, 1808.
20	T	Blacke ck Shooting begins,
21	W	Battle of Vimiera, 1808.
22	Th	Sir Francis H. Doyle born, 1810.
23	F	Albert Bridge (Chelsea) opened, 1873.
24	FSM	St. Bartholomew, Apostle and Mart. r.
25	S	10th Sunday after Trinity.
26	M	St. Zephyrinus.
27	T	Dr. R. C. Jebb born, 1841.
28	w	St. Augustine.
29	Th	Oliver Wendell Holmes born, 1809.
30	F	Strasbourg Library destroyed, 1870.
31	8	St. Aidan.

MOON'S PHASES.

4th.	First Quarter	 14.	27m.	Afternoon.
11th.	Full Moon	 4	43	Morning.
18th.	Last Quarter	 10	51	Morning.
26th.	New Moon	 2	0	Afternoon.

29 30

SEPTEMBER.

11th Sunday after Trinity. Partridge Shooting begins. Lord Halsbury born, 1825. Sir Wilfrid Lawson born, 1829. Prof. Odling born, 1829. Robert Hunt, F. R. S., born, 1807. Victorien Sardou born, 1831. 12th Sunday after Trinity. John Hollingshead born, 1837. Philip G. Hamerton born, 1844. Battle of Cambuskenneth, 1297. Marquis of Bute born, 1847. Sir Julian Pannesfote born, 1828. Holy Cross Day. 13th Sunday after Trinity. F. Seymour Haden born, 1818. Frederick Goodall, R. A., born, 1822. London and Birmingham kailway opened, John P. Seddon born, 1820. Sir Ed. Jas. Reed born, 1830. St. Matthew, Apostle, Evangelist, & Mariyr. 18th Sunday after Trinity. Battle of Assaye, 1803. St. Rusticus. Way M. Rosetti born, 1820. SMTWHESSMTW ThESMTW ThESMTW Battle of Assayt, 1999. St. Rusticus. Wm. M. Rosetti born, 1829. Thos. Sidney Cooper born, 1803. Paul Féval born, 1817. Fr. T. Palgrave born, 1824. 15th Sunday after Trinity. Michaelmas Dy. Archdeacon Pott born, 1822. THESM

MOON'S PHASES.

2nd.	First Quarter	 7h.	35m.	Afternoon,
	Full Moon	 1		Afternoon.
17th.	Last Quarter	 4	49	Morning.
95th	Now Moon	 34	42	Morning

OCTOBER.

1 T Pheasant Shooting begins. 3 Th Gunpowder explosion, Regent's Canal, Lord Justice Lopes born, 1828. 4 F Horace Mann born, 1823. 5 S Charles T. Floquet born, 1828. 6 S Icha Sunday after Trinity. 6 B W Miguel de Gervantes born, 1834. 7 Th Gold Michaelmas Day. 8 S H. Drummond Wolff born, 1830. 8 S H. Drummond Wolff born, 1837. 8 W M Harcourt born, 1837. 8 W Houses of Parliament burnt, 1834. 8 F S Luke. 8 Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. 8 Luke. 9 S Sir Barry Frendergate born, 1832. 9 S Sir Barry Frendergate born, 1834. 9 S Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. 9 S W Wrock of Sir Goudestey Shovel, 1707. 9 S S S Count von Molke born, 1895. 9 S S Gount von Molke born, 1890. 19 S S Simon and Jude.	
Miguel de Cervantes born, 1847. Wm. Minto born, 1845. Old Miebaelmas Day. Sir H. Drummond Wolff born, 1830. The Sunday after Trinity. Wm. Harcourt born, 1827. Wm. Harcourt born, 1827. Wm. Harcourt born, 1834. Sir Harry Frendergast born, 1834. Houses of Parliament barnt, 1834. St. Luke. Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. St. Luke. Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. St. Luke. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Macquis of Ripon born, 1827.	1874
Miguel de Cervantes born, 1847. Wm. Minto born, 1845. Old Miebaelmas Day. Sir H. Drummond Wolff born, 1830. The Sunday after Trinity. Wm. Harcourt born, 1827. Wm. Harcourt born, 1827. Wm. Harcourt born, 1834. Sir Harry Frendergast born, 1834. Houses of Parliament barnt, 1834. St. Luke. Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. St. Luke. Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781. St. Luke. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Wmeek of Sir Cloudestey Shovel, 1707. Macquis of Ripon born, 1827.	
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Th Marquis of Ripon born, 1827.	
Th Marquis of Ripon born, 1827. Jos. Archer Crowe born, 1825. S Count von Moltke born, 1800.	
S Count von Moltke born, 1825,	
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B 1011 C 1 C B 1	
3 19th Sunday after Trinity.	
T Hare Hunting begins.	
W Isabella II., ex-Queen of Spain, born, Th All Hallow E'en.	1830.

MOON'S PRASES.

2nd.	First Quarter	 11.	33m.	Morning.
9th.	Full Moon	 2	25	Morning.
17th.	Last Quarter	 0	39	Morning.
24th.	New Moon	 2	26	Afternoon,
31st.	First Quarter	 8	31	Morning.

NOVEMBER.

-	1	1	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	F	All Saints.	
2	8 8	All Souls.	
3	5	20th Sunday after Trinity.	
4	M	Sir Edward Fry born, 1827.	
5	T	General Butler born, 1818.	
6	W	Bishop Claughton born, 1803.	
7	Th	Last Auto-da-Fé, Seville, 1781.	
8	F	Baron N. Meyer Rothschild bern, 1	847
9	8	Prince of Wales born, 1841.	
10	FSM	21st Sunday after Trinity.	
11		Count Gleichen born, 1833.	
12	T	St. Martin.	
13	W	St. Brice.	
14	Th	C. L. De Freycinet born, 1928.	
15	F	St. Gertrude.	
16	. 8 . 5 . M	John H. Ingram born, 1849.	
17	S	22nd Sunday after Trinity.	
18	M	Wm. S. Gilbert born, 1836.	
19	T	Ferdinand de Lesseps born, 1903.	
20	W	St. Edmund,	
21	Th	Empress Victoria of Germany born,	1840.
22	F	St. Cecilia.	
23	F S M	Thos. Ed. Kebbel born, 1829.	
24	S	23rd Sunday after Trinity.	
25	M	St. Catherine.	
26	T	Réné Goblet born, 1828.	
27	W	Frank Dicksee, A.R.A., born, 1853.	
28	Th	Leslie Stephen born, 1832.	
29	F	Rhoda Broughton born, 1840,	
30	8	St. Andrew, Apostle and Martyr.	
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MOON'S PHASES.

7th.	Full Moon	 48.	5m.	Afterneon.
15th.	Last Quarter	 8	39	Aftern on.
23rd.	New Moon	 1	44	Morning.
20th	First Ounrtor	 5	90	Afternoon.

DECEMBER.

	S	Advent Sunday. Princess of Wales b., 1844
1	T	A. W. Parsons (Artist) born, 1847.
1	w	Sir Fred. Leighton, P.R.A., born, 1830. Frances P. Cobbe born, 1822.
1	Th	H. F. W. Lucy born, 1345.
1	10	Prof. Max Muller born, 1823.
1	- 62	Marshal Ney shot, 1815.
1	8	2nd Sunday in Advent.
1	F S M	Prince Krapotkin born, 1812.
1	T	Grouse Shooting ends.
1	W	E. L. Blanchard born, 1820,
1	Th	Surrender of Falsburg, 1870.
1	F	Lord John Manners born, 1813.
1	F S M	Prince Albert died, 1861.
ı	S	3rd Sunday in Advent.
ı	M	George Scharf born, 1820.
ı	T	J. G. Whittier born, 1807.
ı	W	Alex. Chatrain born, 1526.
ı	Th	Baron Ferd. James Rothschild born, 1830. Napoleon elected President, 1848.
ſ	R	St. Thomas. (Total eclip. of Sun,
1	FSSM	4th Sunday in Advent. inv. at Greenwich.
1	M	Duke of Guise assassinated, 1589,
ı	T	Matthew Arnold born, 1822; died, April 15,
1	W	Christmas Day. [1888.
ı	Th	St. Stephen, Martyr. Bank Holiday.
ı	F	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.
1	8	Innocents' Day. [born, 1809.
ı	S	1st Sunday aft. Christmas, W. E. Gladstone
1	FSMT	Charles P. Stanford born, 1852.
1	T	Ed. Aug. Bond (Brit. Museum) born, 1818;

MOON'S PHASES.

7th.	Full Moon	 94.	53m.	Morning.
15th.	Last Quarter	 2	58	Afternoon.
22nd.	New Moon	 0	52	Afternoon,
29th.	First Quarter	 5	16	Morning.

Golden :	Numb	er	 9	1	Solar Cycle		22	Roman Indiction Julian Period	 2
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